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Ins Ölbaumdüster, auf des Saumtiers Pfaden :
Steil, steinig und verschwiegen ist die Bahn.
Hier mag die Seele rein vom Staub sich baden !
Von nahen Hängen grüsst das lichte Laub
Der Goldlimone. Bläulich, von Terrassen,
Wölkt die Olive ernste Wipfelmassen :
Darüber hin ein Reif, wie Silberstaub.

Wohin ? Nur tiefer in die Schlucht hinein,
Die schon von Anfang dich entrückt der Stunde.
Wie Pallas' Goldhelm oben blitzt ein Schein.
Wie Eumenidendonner murrt's im Grunde.
Doch tief im Schatten, an der Quelle Ranft,
Hebt jetzt das Einhorn still das Haupt vom Rasen
Und sieht mich an : die Rosennüstern blasen—
Und weiter äst es, äugend klug und sanft.

Du weisses Fabeltier in Pallas' Hain,
Erharrtest du mich einsam hier ? Wie lange ? . . .
Hoch ein Getrümmer hängt ins Tal herein :
Die Abendglut küsst Turm und Mauerwange.
Ist dies der Schutt zerfallner Griechenpracht,
Zu der mich späte Pulse heimlich drängen ?
Soll ich die Seele an Getrümmer hängen ?
Da schwingt ein Ton sich aus der Waldesnacht.

Heiss schwillt er auf ! Es ist der alte Born
Der Menschenbrust, in Sehnsucht überquillend :
Narkissos singt, gebückt in Strauch und Dorn,
Das Körbchen fleissig mit Oliven füllend—
Auf wachend spielt dazu der Drosseln Schlag—
Und Echo tönt ein andrer Born der Lieder :
Der Knabe schluchzt, und schluchzend kommt es
wieder.
Im letzten Glanze lauscht der Frühlingstag.

Hinan ! Du graues Bergnest über mir
Sollst dein versteckt Pygmäenvolk mir zeigen.
Die gleiche Dumpfheit über Mensch und Tier
Und Gärten, die in Stufen mit mir steigen.
Zerwühlt der Grund. Der Scholle Brodem, reich
Ausdampfend, Früchte ohne Mass gebärend.
Der Gärtner, atmend, fronend und verzehrend,
In Dumpfheit schwälend, seinen Früchten gleich.

Wir sind nicht dumpf, und rein ist unsre Brust
Vom Brodem, drin die Götterbilder weben.
Uns kann die matte Qual und schale Lust
Den leeren, weiten Himmel nicht beleben :
Entgöttert die Natur, so ganz wie er !
Tief unten rauscht die blaue Glut zu Lande.
Ich sehe keine Beter knien am Strande.
Und doch : du bist es noch, du heiliges Meer !

Allein wer hindert mich, dass ich mein Haupt
Zur Erde neige und Poseidon grüsse ?
Dass ich in Ehrfurcht, wenn auch marktbestaubt,
Im Strahl des Helios die Augen schliesse ?
Zeus Hypatos, dass ich, anrufend, dir
Den Hauch, den du mir schenktest, wiederschenke ?
Wer, Aphrodite, dass ich dein gedenke
Und deines ewigen Götterstrahls in mir ?

Wer hindert mich ?—" Nicht ich ! "—Nicht du !
Ich weiss !
Du bleicher Schmerzensgott, den ich nicht nenne.
Ich fühle dich, o Haupt voll Blut und Schweiss,
Und deine Stimme ist's, die ich erkenne !
Nicht du !—

Da klappt und klimmt ein müder Huf.
Silenus führt sein magres Tier am Zügel,
Sorglich und fromm : ein Kranker hängt im Bügel . . .
Und durch die Luft erschwillt Hosiannaruf.

Ligurischer Mann auf deiner Eselin :
Was blickst du her auf mich aus wunden Sternen ?
Willst du mich kennen, landfremd wie ich bin ?—
" Wir waren eins in tiefentsunknen Fernen."
O, Bruder ! Eros zuckt im Auge dir
Und schiesst den Pfeil : schon spürich heiss die Wunde :
Mit tiefstem Schmerze dehnt er die Sekunde
Zur Ewigkeit und schenkt sie dir und mir.

Three Poems

By W. B. Yeats

I. ON A RECENT GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENT IN IRELAND

Being out of heart at Government
I took a broken root to fling
Where the proud wayward squirrel went,
Taking delight that he could spring ;
And he, with that low whinnying sound
That is like laughter, sprang again
And so to the other tree at a bound.
Nor the tame will, nor timid brain,
Nor heavy knitting of the brow,
Bred that fierce tooth and cleanly limb
And threw him up to laugh on the bough ;
No Government appointed him.

II. GALWAY RACES

There where the racecourse is
Delight makes all of the one mind
The riders upon the swift horses
The field that closes in behind.

We too had good attendance once,
Hearers, hearteners of the work,
Aye, horsemen for companions
Before the merchant and the clerk
Breathed on the world with timid breath;
But some day and at some new moon
We'll learn that sleeping is not death
Hearing the whole earth change its tune,
Flesh being wild again, and it again
Crying aloud as the racecourse is;
And find hearteners among men
That ride upon horses.

III. DISTRACTION

All things can tempt me from this craft of verse
One time it was a woman's face, or worse
The seeming needs of my fool-driven land,
Now nothing but comes readier to the hand
Than this accustomed toil. When I was young
I had not given a penny for a song
Did not the poet carry him with an air
As though to say "It is the sword elsewhere,"
I would be now, could I but have my wish,
Colder and dumber and deafer than a fish.

Five Poems

By Walter de la Mare

I. ALONE

No sound over the deep, only the desolate foam,
White in the evening mist, of the last wave home:
No sound over the fields, only the lonely cry
Of the last bird speeding to rest and nest 'neath the darkening sky.

I walk and I think of you here—your courage, your truth ; I know,
Though the lips and the heart be silenced, and the eyes into darkness go,
These still may live within me, if I keep my truth, and am brave ;
Nor mourn too sadly, wildly for one, who mourns no more in the grave.

Yet, yet, even you will forgive, if a grief, as still as the sea
With all its waters a flood at peace, call on hope's shores for thee ;
You will forgive, if a late bird weary, 'neath a sorrow as dark as the night,
Cry low, sad, keen, in so deep a peace, your dear name, once, in the height.

II. NEVER-TO-BE

Down by the waters of the sea,
Reigns the King of Never-to-Be.
His palace walls are black with night ;
His torches star and moones light,
And for his timepiece deep and grave
Beats on the green unhastening wave.

Windswept are his high corridors ;
His pleasance the sea-mantled shores ;
For sentinel a shadow stands
With hair in heaven, and cloudy hands ;
And round his bed, king's guards to be,
Watch pines in iron solemnity.

His hound is mute ; his steed at will
Roams pastures deep with asphodel ;
His queen is to her slumber gone ;
His courtiers mute lie, hewn in stone ;
He hath forgot where he did hide
His sceptre in the mountain-side.

Grey-capped and muttering, mad is he—
The childless King of Never-to-Be ;

For all his people in the deep
Keep everlasting fast asleep ;
And all his realm is foam and rain,
Night, the unfathomable main.

III. MRS. McQUEEN

(OF THE LOLLIE-SHOP)

WITH glass like a bull's-eye,
And shutters of green,
Down on the cobbles
Lives Mrs. McQueen.

At six she rises.
At nine you see
Her candle shine out
In the linden tree :

And at half-past-nine
Not a sound is nigh
But the bright moon's creeping
Across the sky ;

Or a far dog baying ;
Or a twittering bird,
In its drowsy nest,
In the darkness stirred

Or, like the roar
Of a distant sea,
A long-drawn S-s-sh !
From the linden tree.

IV. AN EPITAPH

HERE lies a most beautiful lady,
Light of step and heart was she ;
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever dwelt in the West Countrie.

But beauty vanishes ; beauty passes ;
However rare—rare it be :
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Countrie ?

V. NOD

Softly along the road of evening,
In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age and drenched with dew,
Old Nod, the Shepherd goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
Their fleeces charged with gold,
To where the sun's last beam leans low
On Nod the Shepherd's fold.

The hedge is quick and green with briar ;
From their sand the conies creep ;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses,
Yet, when night's shadows fall,
His blind old sheep-dog Slumber-Soon
Misses not one of all.

His are the molied steeps of dreamland,
The waters of no-more-pain,
His ram's bell 'neath an arch of stars
Rings, "Rest, and rest again."

Afternoon Tea

By J. Marjoram

Ah ! How do you do ? (*The game begins !*
Do my eyes show how my heart must bleed ?
Yours don't, . . . or you doctor them wonderfully . . .
dear !)
Who is he ? . . . with the head like a pear,
And the indrawn cheeks of a . . . Gondolier ?
He founded a Home for the Fishless Finns !
Who, he thought, were about to disappear,
Yes . . . quite original . . . guaranteed !

(*How many times, how many weeks*
Must we meet like this ? . . . I know there's fun
In all illicit things . . . but it palls.
When I think I've only just begun
To make you feel . . . the curtain falls
From your eyes . . . in the midst of this crowd, we're one,
And our secret's safe . . . except for your cheeks
Where the spirit of all temptation speaks
As plain as if, at some recognised shrine
We'd been sanctioned by all these . . . swine !)

Must I take this cup to the Dowager ?
Too bad, . . . He ! he ! (*Across the room*
Our eyes converse . . . Do you look at her
Jealous ? . . . I said "The Dowager,"
And so she is, for me !)—The bloom
On those hydrangeas, isn't it fine ?
Two lumps, if you please, . . . Dear me, it's wet !
. . . I saw him on Thursday, he seemed quite well !
(*Why will you use your eyes till I fret*
Like a horse—I'd gallop with you to Hell . . .
Come out to the garden . . . September's here !)
The Links are close . . . they've a capital view !
(*A dove-coloured rain-cloud's abrush with the blue,*
But all the humid lawn and wood,—
Scented and flashing, now they're soaked,
And redolent always of Love and You,—

Won't heal the hurt of your eyes! . . .) I choked
With laughing nearly . . . wasn't it good!

(*Eyes, I know what you mourn to say,*
We have argued it all before!
You think you will spoil what I have to do?
I am the man . . . I'll take the risk . . .
Better to sink in the void with you,
Than survive alone to find the shore!)
The head is fine, but, in its way,
I prefer the one with the disc!

(*That blouse of yours, the colour of cream,*
With lace that froths right up to your ear . . .)
He walks as if he went by steam!
Ha, ha! . . . (*Could you disrobe, my dear,*
From that, as easily as your eyes
Let slip your naked soul, what a dream
Of neck and shoulders you'd lay bare!)
A pretty room . . . that dado, now,
Is really . . . (*Darling, if you dare*
To screw up your lips like that, I'll kick
Prudence, the sneak, to his master, Nick!)
. . . Thank you, it's most refreshing. . . (*How*
Do I find my tea? . . . You touch the cup
With one slim finger . . . I'll drink it up
Though it be blood!) The eye can roam
So restfully on that weather-worn
Moss-covered old red barn, . . . with its vane . . .
Might be a Morland? . . . Say old Crome . . .
(*Suddenly dumb! . . . Why! I'd be slain*
To bring the mischief back to your face,
If only that bubble of dainty lace
You call your handkerchief, were torn
To tie up the bleeding place! . . .
But you're a woman . . . O! the scorn!)

A piece of cake? . . . (*Again you plead:*
You only inspire an hour's lust,
Then fall forever . . . a thing of custom,
Mortgaged away. If what you need
Is this performance twice a week
Till you are seventy . . . Well! . . . you must!
Pour out tea to your heart's disgust . . .

Amid chatter of fools . . . Can you deduce
This as your destiny?)

(Look at the pale ethereal cloud
That topples heavily . . . and shows
The murky side of heavenly snows,
A cloud's disgrace . . . but it helps the grass
To live! . . . And we? . . . We boast . . . and pass
For never having quite allowed
"Nature" to have Her will with us! . . .
She IS so . . . Miscellaneous.
—In fact, by our advice, . . . impure . . .
Is aught too good to make . . . manure?
Pray, what is Purity . . . who knows?)

No, thank you. I'd much rather walk.
(*O pretty blush!*) The barn? . . . (*again?*
You're all confusion . . . for you can see
I refuse a lift, in order to be
Allowed to stay with you and . . . talk,
And you wish to stay, and . . . talk, with me.)

Thank you, No! . . . it's out of my way!
(*I'll tell you what we'll do one day;*
We'll give Society the slip,
And dress you up in a pinafore,
Then you shall teach me how to skip,
I'll skip till you can't laugh any more,
And smother you in the hay!)
Goodbye, Mr. . . . much better . . . thanks!
Quite convalescent; . . . (*There they go,*
As dribbles off the mountain's flanks
The weary weight of winter snow . . .
And Spring, our Spring, is here . . . and so—
When Mary comes to take the tray,
I'd like to tell her, dear old soul,
The reason why, day after day
She finds me loitering, when the whole
Of the company's gone, is that I stay
To be drowned in your fits of glum despair,
Cling to the hope in a kiss I stole,
Be waked to life by the raillery
In your eyes and voice . . . at last to be
Caught and burned alive in your hair!)

Five Poems

By John Galsworthy

I. RHYME OF THE LAND AND SEA

By the side of me—the immortal Pan—
Lies the wanton maid of the sea ;
In her gown of brine,
With her breast to mine,
And her drowned dark hair, lies she.

And her eyes, that have swayed the fathomy weed,
So mournful are fixed on me !
"I am thy slave, O master, O Pan !
And never shall more be free ! "

But her smile—like the wine-red, shadowy sea,
When the day slides past and down,
By the gods—it is tender death to me,
In its waters dark I drown !
O slave of mine ! thou mystery
Of smiling depths—I drown !

II. GAULZERY MOOR

Moor of my fathers—the road leads high—
I, a slow-foot traveller, pass,
Gorse and heather, heather and grass,
Up to the curve of the autumn sky.
Purple are all the darkening tors
That crown the swift-retreating day ;
The far-blown wood-smoke steals its way
From stars of fire in the cottage doors ;
And the South-West wind with her reedy tune
Sings in the pines her wild, soft praise ;
There hangs a golden, mocking moon
At the Western cornerways.

Ah ! beneath these native trees
To press my body to the earth,
To drink the life-wine of this breeze,
And—drinking—die of dearth !

III. ON A MILITARY FUNERAL

The pipes have skirled,
And Heaven chimes wild music in the sky ;
Above the graveyard lightning flares ;
The rain is whirled.

And drums still beat ;
A man is going to immortal rest—
The cold light falling on the stones
His winding sheet.

How stood his life ?
Written in silence and obscurity ?
Or blazoned forth, a little lamp,
Through this grey strife ?

Such milestones fade
Upon the road that he has gone. No odds !
There's music to his funeral,
The score is paid.

The pipes shrill high ;
The sky is sending requiem of grief ;
To the dull chorus of the rain,
The drum-beats die.

IV. PAST

The clocks are chiming in my heart
Their cobweb chime ;
Old murmurings
Of days that die,
The sob of things
A-drifting by.
The clocks are chiming in my heart !

The stars have twinkled, and gone out—
Fair candles blown !
The hot desires
Burn low, and wan
Those ashy fires
That flamed anon.
The stars have twinkled and gone out !

Old journeys travel in my head !
They come and go—
Forgotten smiles
Of stranger friends ;
Sweet, weary miles,
And sweeter ends.
Old journeys travel in my head

The leaves are dropping from my tree—
Dead leaves and brown !
The vine-leaf ghosts
Make pale my brow ;
For ever frosts
And winter now.
The leaves are dropping from my tree !

V. PROMENADE

All sweet and startled gravity
My Love comes walking from the Park ;
Her eyes are full of what they've seen,
The little bushes puffing green,
The candles pale that light the chestnut tree.

The tulip, and the jonquil spies ;
The sunshine, and the sudden dark ;
The dance of buds ; and madam dove ;
Sir blackbird fluting of his love—
These little loves my Love has in her eyes.

In dainty shoes, and subtle hose,
My Love comes walking from the Park.
She is, I swear, the sweetest thing
That ever left the heart of Spring,
To tell the secret : Whence the pollen blows !

The Island of Typhoëus

By Norman Douglas

I

Though I do not see them marked upon those nautical charts which the late Admiral Magnaghi loved to draw, there must be currents in the Mediterranean that flow consistently in the direction of Campania. Long ago, in mythological times, the dead Siren Parthenope, floating upon the waters, drifted landwards and found a resting-place and an honoured tomb at Naples; a sea-current, therefore, had decided the religion of that great city. Then, in the heroic age, came Palinurus, pilot of Æneas, whose body also drifted westwards till it touched the promontory which bears his name. The phenomenon becomes better authenticated as we enter into the historical period. Thus we possess the record of the corpse of Saint Costanzo, patriarch of Constantinople and now patron Saint of Capri, which floated, carefully packed in a barrel, from the Euxine into the Bay of Naples. It arrived fresh and uninjured. And is there not a well-ascertained record of the Sainted Virgin Restituta, whose corpse was wafted from Africa to the Bay of Naples on a millstone? The blessed body came to land near Lacco Ameno on the island of Ischia, which is the subject of this modest sketch. In proof of the miracle, the millstone exists to this day, as well as the church of Santa Restituta which stands near the famous mineral springs of the same name. . . .

Landing one morning on this fabled and sunny beach, with my mind attuned to the marvellous by the proximity of the commemorative shrine, I beheld a sight that froze the blood in my veins; a human head was resting on the sand a few yards from the water's edge. Its countenance was turned from me and otherwise concealed under a white cloth like a towel. The country folk walked up and down as though utterly unaware of its existence, as if such sights were part of everyday life: sedate fishermen mended their nets near by, children played around, shouting merrily. Shocked by the incredible callousness of the

people and half-suspecting myself to be the victim of a ghastly hallucination, I stooped, trembling, and snatched away the concealing cloth. This innocent proceeding caused the head to burst into broken Neapolitan mingled with a few clear snatches of the English tongue which nothing would induce me to set down here.

It was only an Englishman taking a sand-bath for his rheumatisms. Presently the earth heaved in huge convulsions and the modern Typhoëus emerged pawing, like Milton's lion, to set free his hinder parts. He had solemnly burnt his crutches two days previously "and, by Jove, you cannot think what a joy it is to toddle on one's own stumps again." I could, though, for I had gone through the same purgatory.

It was one of the happy fables of the Greeks this of the giant Typhoëus enchained under the island of Ischia and perpetually struggling to break his fetters. Hence the convulsive earthquakes. So you may see him depicted in the frontispiece to Iasolini's work, where he looks good-natured enough—probably because the engraver did not live to witness the catastrophe of 1883.

To believe this same author, there is not a malady on earth that cannot be cured by one or the other of the Ischia baths. The very names of some of them are now forgotten and I suspect that they have either been covered by landslips or that they have dried up in consequence of the diminution of timber. Iasolini, to be sure, wrote in 1580, but recent vagaries on this subject are not wanting. Does the hair of your eyelashes drop out? Try the *Bagno di Piaggia Romana.* Is your complexion unsatisfactory? The *Bagno di Santa Maria del Popolo* will put that right. Are you deaf? The *Bagno d'Ulmitello.* Blind? *Bagno delle Caionche.* Head-ache, chill on the liver, or kidney trouble? *Bagno di Fontana.* Does your nose itch? The *Sudatorio di Castiglione.* Tooth-ache, or impetigo? *Bagno di Succellaro.* Perhaps your heart needs comfort? The *Bagno dell'Oro* will suit your case. Are you a victim to hypochondria? The *Sudatorio di Cacciotto* dispels black humours. Or have you scalded your finger with boiling water? Try the *Bagno di Fontana* again. Does your grandfather complain of baldness, are you troubled with elephantiasis, or is your wife anxious to be blessed with children? Hasten, all three of you, to the *Bagno di Citara.*

The excellent *Iulius Iasolinus medicus et philosophus:* did he really believe it all? *Chi lo sà!* Others did, and Ischia began to thrive.

At Santa Restituta can be seen an ancient vase of pleasing workmanship, now adapted to church uses. It is one of the few antiquities found on the island and comes from the neighbouring height of Vico, the old Hellenic citadel. They were unfortunate in their choice of settlements, those Ischian Greeks. Hardly had a new colony begun to thrive, than a playful volcano burst up in their midst and scared them away. No wonder the Sirens refused to stay on such an uncertain tenement, for Sirens are attached to their homesteads; they prefer to dwell near deep-rooted limestone cliffs rather than on the lid of a cauldron. I have found little on Ischia that recalls such sea-creatures to the mind; but at Forio there is an islet which bears the strangely beautiful name of Impusa—

Enfin, nous sortîmes de Babylone; et au clair de la lune, nous vîmes tout-à-coup une empuse. . . . Oui-dà! Elle sautait sur son sabot de fer; elle hennissait comme un ane; elle galopait dans les rochers. Il lui cria des injures; elle disparut . . . and whoever drives from Forio to Pansa will have seen, couched in the waves, a pale rock of noble contour: a sea-sphynx. But nymphs there were in Ischia, *nitric* nymphs, whose duty was to guard the healing waters. Many antique votive tablets have been found testifying to their friendly aid and to that of Apollo the Healer. They have been figured by Beloch and others and are now in the Naples Museum, most of them.

At Nitroli, their home, the kindly element still gushes forth mirthfully from the warm slopes of Epomeo and tumbles downhill with busy din, carving a deep gully into the hill-side; woodbine and wild roses trip alongside, with here and there a tuft of rustling canes—those very canes that whispered in olden days the dread secret: "Midas has asses' ears." The water loses itself in one of the cañons that seam the southern coast of the island and make it look, from the sea, like the rind of an over-ripe melon. These *burroni* were a sure refuge to the inhabitants during the troubled times of the Middle Ages. Their crumbling walls descend perpendicularly into the abyss and not a year passes that some poor hay-gatherer is not found shattered at their foot. Down in their windless depths eternal twilight reigns; giant poplars crane their necks to reach sunshine and air; their crowns caress the edge on either side of the horrible chasm and a squirrel, if such there were, could cross the gulf on this leafy viaduct.

Even now they have their uses. Criminals can skulk in them for weeks and months waiting for a chance to escape to the mainland, if the population favours them by bringing food-

supplies. Only two days ago a woman in one of these mountain villages calmly thrust a huge knife into her husband, who was dying at the moment of my arrival. She resented being beaten by him. Now, Neapolitan women are proud of this kind of treatment on the part of their spouses, regarding it as a proof of affection—when I urged this point of view upon the elders of the village, they excused her on the ground that she was *not* a Neapolitan and knew no better. The whole countryside had been to examine the wound; small children joined the tips of their thumbs and first fingers of both hands crying, "So big, so big!" and one old crone, who was regarded with peculiar veneration, remarked that she had seldom seen a finer sight. Plainly, the husband was an unpopular man and there was a general consensus of opinion that the murderess was not going to be caught. The old woman summed up the situation by saying: "She will only be caught if she is a downright fool"—meaning, presumably, if she deliberately walks into the barracks of the *carabinieri* who were then supposed to be looking for her.

The girls in the northern villages of Ischia, with the exception of one or two at Lacco, are mostly plain, but here in the Nitroli region you may see many of rare beauty—nymph-like creatures, flower-loving, soft-voiced, with flashing Mænad eyes. Their good looks have been attributed to the fact that they wash their *household linen* in warm mineral water. The boys are more commonly fair-complexioned: an interesting and anomalous case of sexual dimorphism if it be true, as naturalists tell us, that the dark type is everywhere tending to supplant the blonde and that the males ought to be the first to display this innovation. These youths are not of the amiable variety; they do not smile and say *Buon giorno, Signore;* they prefer, whenever possible, to look in the other direction. But that is only their way. The Ischiotes are to some extent a mixed race; they lack the full-blooded homogeneity of the people of Vesuvius. But they have a character of their own and differ, in this respect, from those of Capri who have divested themselves of every idiomatic feature and have become mere parasites on the foreigners at whose expense they thrive. The apparent scowl of many of these islanders is not a scowl at all; it is a look of distrustful shyness, born of long centuries of piratical inroads and domestic oppression. The stupendous earthquake of 1883, when in less than fifteen seconds over seven thousand of them perished by the most horrible death, has also contributed its share; it has shattered not only their houses and well-being, but also their *morale*. They are poor, hopelessly poor; few of them are proprietors of

the soil they cultivate—utterly different, again, from the Capri peasants, most of whom are thrice as rich as the foreigners who visit their "humble" cottages. Some Spanish pride, maybe, still lingers in their veins, for Alfonso the Magnanimous, in one of his most magnanimous moods, removed all the native men from the island and populated it with his Spaniards whom he forced to marry their widows and daughters. Capaccio, who has penned a spleenful sentence on this subject, supposes this to have been done in order to "soften" the Ischiote character.

But, above all, the unsteady earth with its sinister reelings has pictured itself upon the insular mind. If Ischia could procure a well-regulated outlet after the manner of Stromboli, this danger might be averted and a more ridibund race of men gradually evolved. Or if Vesuvius ceased its activity, a new crater might open at Ischia, for these two, so far as has been observed, are reciprocally intermittent, the antique Ischia eruptions ceasing when the other began with his grand opening entertainment at Pompei and Herculaneum and only recommencing during the long mediæval slumber of Vesuvius.

That was in 1301. A stream of lava, called the Arso, flowed from the mountains into the sea. Its pathway is now discernible from its covering of stone pines; but these were only planted about 1850; unlike other lava-streams that yield sooner or later to the inroads of vegetation, this one remained for five long centuries a blot on the landscape, a barren desolation, deriding every attempt at culture. With the advent of the pines, all has changed. A wild garden with labyrinthine paths, a marvel of taste and patient labour, covers a portion of the arid waste. Even now the burnt stones dominate in monstrous contortion of pinnacle and dell, and their riven masses, painted with rosy-grey lichen, twist themselves into threatening attitudes of earth-demons that clench their fists and refuse to yield their ancient empire. But they are half underground already and their days are numbered. Where everything else has failed, the pines have conquered. Here are no lustrous carobs, no figs or olives, no groves of sombre ilex :—pines are everywhere. Their crowns interlace and the sunlight pours down through their firm and coralline branches, weaving arabesque patterns on the floor. Pleasant at all times of the year it is to tread the mazes of this fairyland; in the hottest days of midsummer a sea-breeze is always felt and *heard*. Then, too, the shady ailantus, bare in winter, comes to help the pine, and thus the lively green flits about with the months—in winter it shines on earth, for the rocks are starred with a thousand mosses and ferns and anemones

that creep away at the approach of June; in summer, overhead.

At all seasons the pine struggles. Its task is twofold. Below ground, its roots must insinuate themselves into the rocks—tenderly at first, like a maiden's caress, but soon with the horrid grip of a fiend—sucking strength, by strange alchemy, from their fire-scorched entrails. From above, meanwhile, a noiseless shower of pine-needles is descending. Ceaselessly they fall; where they fall, they lie. The chinks of the stone receive this aerial soil and up springs a gay family of broom, honeysuckle, cistus, erica, myrtle, valerian, ivy, lentiscus, quick to take advantage of the situation. The whole flora of Ischia riots at the foot of these glorious pines. For unlike our raven-hearted beech, this tree encourages children and neighbours alike to take pleasure under its ample skirts.

It is easy, no doubt, to say good things of other pines. *Pinus laricio* produces better timber; the Canary pine is more feathery; that of Aleppo more vivid in colour and more prolific. But considerations of utility rule the Universe. The stone pine, besides bearing edible fruit, has many advantages over its rivals. It grows faster and to a larger size; its roots are more searchingly destructive to the lava; its wood has fewer knots. It despises a prop even in tenderest youth: "the stone pine grows straight by nature" say the botanists. A thousand wooden props are a serious financial consideration in a treeless country like Italy.

The benefactor who planted these pines has given not only health and pleasure to posterity. In the pleasaunce of La Mandra alone are over three thousand of them and they were full-grown twenty years ago. The cost of planting is minimal: you scratch a hole in the lava and force your sapling into it; the tree rises aloft without more ado. Nowadays, of course, there is no further need of planting, for they seed themselves. If we value each pine at the absurdly low figure of fifty francs, it will be seen what a fortune this worthy successor of Varro and Columella has prepared for others, on ground, too, where formerly not a blade of grass would grow. This fortune can be realised at any moment. But regarding the man who endeavours to do so—what shall be his lot? May ten thousand devils pinch him night and day with red-hot irons. . . .

For the work—the rock-cleaving, *humanising* work—of this grand tree is not yet accomplished. The demons are lurking at hand, ready to emerge once more and resume dominion. If you doubt it, cut down the pines and watch. For my own part, I confess I should not be displeased if the Great Contriver's

hand could be stayed at this intermediate moment, inasmuch as methinks there are vineyards and cornfields galore on earth, but few spots as fair as this harmonious pinery of La Mandra.

There are, of course, some Ischian plants that you will seek in vain here. The island is full of rare and beautiful flowers and perhaps the most interesting botanical discovery is that of Tenore who found, near certain outlets of volcanic vapour, two exotic plants, one of them native of Jamaica and the other growing in India, Arabia and Africa. The temperature of the earth in which these have their roots never falls below 20 degrees Réaumur, and Tenore suspects that they are relics of the former tropical European flora—relics that have found a refuge in these warm cavities from the ice-covering of the Glacial Period that destroyed the others. His theory, if correct, says much for the stability of Ischia.

Then there are the great white orchids, odourless like their fellows, but fair to see. They grow in the woods about the extinct crater of Monte Rotaro. I recommend this hill as one of the most charming on the island. Its sides are overgrown with a dense covering of ilex and arbutus, and down below, where the fires once flamed, lies a green meadow. In it are interred the victims of the cholera of the 'thirties, many foreigners among them. It would be hard to find a pleasanter resting-place for all eternity unless it be the hermitage of Citrella on Capri, where simultaneously the cholera victims of that island were buried. But what a contrast between the two ! Here the volcanic earth with its hoary mantle of vegetation and within the deep funnel a woodland calm, as though storms and seas no longer existed upon earth :—Citrella, poised like a swallow's nest upon its wind-swept limestone crag ; far below, the Titanic grandeur of South Capri and the glittering ocean strewn with submarine boulders that make it look, from such aerial heights, like a map of the moon enamelled in the matchless blues and greens of a Damascus vase.

Before the road bends downward into the crater, it passes a grassy tract where the traveller may rest awhile from the fatigues of the climb if he picks out a reliable spot ; for the ground is honeycombed with hidden volcanic vents that send forth an invisible and odourless but steaming vapour. One day as I sat upon this deceitful sward, I became aware of a prodigious flight of butterflies. The air was alive with them, they sat upon me and flew in my face—a veritable phenomenon. There were no birds on the spot to profit by this banquet, and the gaudy host fluttered on undisturbed. They seemed to be indifferent whether

flowers bloomed or not; driven by some strange desire of activity they struggled hither and thither in the air till, suddenly, some impulse came upon them and they left me. They were of the *Clouded yellow* species and the newspapers reported that in other countries, too, the apparition had been noted. Only once in my life have I seen anything like it. I was in the club-house of a tropical town, and the sole other occupant of the room at that moment was poor old B——, who, as he himself used to confess, was fast "running to seed." He was staring with a troubled expression out of the window.

"Do you have this kind of thing often?" I innocently asked.

He at once put on the solemn and aggrieved air of a drunkard who suspects that he has been found out.

"May I ask, sir, to what you refer?"

"Why, Mr. B——, don't you see all those butterflies?"

A look of relief came over his face.

Now, if my friend had come to Ischia instead of poisoning himself with fusel-oil sold as whiskey by honest colonial traders, he might have drunk as much as he pleased and been all the better for it. For wine is the water of Ischia, and as a *vino da pasto* it is surpassed by none south of the Castelli Romani. Indeed, it is drunk all over Europe (under other names) and a pretty sight it is to see the many-shaped craft from foreign ports jostling each other in the little circular harbour, one of the few pleasing mementos of Bourbon misrule. The Austrian, battling with his *Papricahendl*, or the Frenchman ogling his omelette and his yard of bread, little dream how much Ischia has contributed to their *Gumboldskirchner* or *vin ordinaire*. Try it therefore through every degree of latitude on the island, from the golden torrents of thousand-vatted Forio up to the pale primrose-hued ichor, a drink for gods, that oozes in reluctant drops from the dwarfed mountain grapes. Try also the red kinds.

Try them all, over and over again. Such at least was the advice of a Flemish gentleman, a fit companion for Harun al Rashid, whom I met in bygone years at Casamicciola. Like most of his countrymen, Mynheer had little *chiaroscuro* in his composition; he was prone to call a spade a spade; but his "rational view of life," as he preferred to define it, was transfigured and irradiated by a profound love of nature. Where there is no landscape, he used to say, there I drink without pleasure. "Landscape refines." "Only beasts drink indoors." Every morning he went in search of new farmhouses in which to drink during the afternoon and evening. And every night, with tremendous din, he was carried

to bed. He never apologised for this disturbance: it was his yearly holiday, he explained. He must have possessed an enviable digestion, for he was up with the lark and I used to hear him at his toilette, singing strange ditties of Meuse or Scheldt. Breakfast over, he would sally forth on his daily quest, thirsty and sentimental as ever. One day, I remember, he discovered a *masseria* more seductive than all the rest—"with a view over Vesuvius and the coast-line, a view, I assure you, of entrancing loveliness!" That evening he never came home at all. The Flemish gentleman's recipe for learning to appreciate the local wines (taken from dictation, July 23, 1889): "You drive to Pansa. You then walk to the top of Epomeo, drinking at every farmhouse on the way. If, when you have reached the summit, you are not convinced of the superlative excellence of Ischia wine, you have only to repeat the process on the way down, this time *via* Barano. . . ."

The vineyards are steadily driving the woodlands uphill and into the remotest recesses of Ischia. From an artistic point of view this is much to be deplored for the vine, however gladsome in its summer greenery, is bare for six months of the year, when its straggling limbs have a peculiarly unkempt and disreputable appearance. (For this reason alone, Ischia should never be visited in winter.) The whole district from Monte Rotaro down to the Pietra Cantante and the Cemetery is now planted with grapes; when I first knew it, there was not a single vine visible, it was deeply embowered in chestnut and oak woods. It is impossible nowadays to reconstruct Bergsoe's charming legend of the *Pietra Cantante* or Singing Stone; the locality would never be recognised. But the tale none the less deserves to be translated into Italian as a historical document—it is a memento of the long Arab domination on Ischia which seems, at this distance of time, as if it had never been and yet has left enduring traces. The raids of the Corsairs were trifling matters; they merely paid flying visits; a change of wind, or the appearance of an Italian sail, sufficed to unsettle their ephemeral plans. (Not quite trifling matters on Ischia, however; on one occasion Barbarossa carried off four thousand of the natives.) The rule of the Saracens, though it does not approach that of a provincial or even military government, was wholly different. Where they dined, they slept.

Appropriately enough, the play given at the local theatre the other day was a drama of this period. The theatre, I should premise, was a disused wine-cellar and the actors were marionettes half life-size, whose movements were regulated by ropes affixed

from above to their heads and arms, while the manager and his wife and family did the talking and pulled the strings as occasion required. At first the effect of the ultra-flexible gestures of the *dramatis personæ* somewhat disturbed the sense of reality; instead of walking, they fluttered a few inches above ground after the manner of Hindu gods, whose feet are too pure to touch mortal earth; they likewise sat, for the most part, on air; but the illusion came quickly enough. The Turks, as they are called, were all painted pitch-black (this is *de rigueur*); their general was a brave fellow covered with plumes and medals and his favourite phrase was:

> . . . Tremble, proud Christian,
> At my wrath.

But he had reckoned without his host, for soon enough his sister fell desperately in love with the Christian leader. "Climb into the camp of the unbelievers," she whispered into the ear of a confidential slave who swam into her presence at the proper moment, "and seek out the bold knight Orlando. Say I love him." The peerless Christian sent word to the effect that, if such were the case, she would doubtless have no difficulty in first procuring for him the head of her warrior brother, which he was anxious to see—without the body. There followed a magnificent decapitation. The good pasha was sleeping after the fatigues of the day in a most uncomfortable position, when his sister cautiously flew into the room and, after performing an airy war-dance, unsheathed her sword. It took no less than eight terrific blows to sever the head from the body, and the shrieks of the pasha were life-like beyond belief. Their *crescendo* and *diminuendo* were rendered with scientific precision and evoked a perfect uproar of applause. The head continued to groan long after its separation from the trunk; never have I heard more realistic gurglings. I suspect that the play was to end with a wholesale slaughter of Mussulmans—a veritable *blutbad* as the Germans poetically call it —but I was reluctantly compelled to leave at the culminating point of the third act, having gathered about me as much of the micro-fauna of Ischia as I could conveniently carry.

Economically considered, the audience of this theatre was an interesting study. There was not one woman among them (a relic of Saracenism); only a few little girls who are not considered as belonging to the sex at that tender age. The males, apart from a sprinkling of priests, were mostly young boys or quite old men. The real workers have no time for such trivialities

on Ischia; they must be up with the sun and are generally asleep by eight o'clock. Oriental types of physiognomy were not uncommon.

Some of the older people bear the scars of hair-breadth escapes in the great catastrophe of 1883 and every one of them can relate the most improbable stories about himself or his relations; or at least about his pigs and goats. The mythopœic faculty is well developed hereabouts. One respectable citizen assured me that his grandmother was entombed under an immense mass of masonry for fourteen days, her head protected by the leg of a chair. She was alive and cheerful when liberated, but soon took to her bed and *gradually died from fright.*

II

At present there is hay-making going on over the ruins and a rank vegetation partly conceals them, but in winter they arise in all their truthfulness. Man and nature co-operate in their gradual obliteration. The peasant, careless of past experience, renews his forsaken homestead or carries away its stones for building material elsewhere; a promiscuous host of weeds and shrubs invade the shattered tenements, unclean lichens eat into the walls, valerian creeps behind the plaster, the sturdier broom and fennel thrust formidable roots into the very heart of the masonry, disquieting the stones and ousting them from their old places; winds and rain meanwhile beat upon the friable tufa till its edges are worn away and the mortar, disintegrated, falls to earth; one day, two lizards fighting, as is their wont, in an inextricable knot of legs and tails, tumble upon a loosened block, and down it comes. At a rough computation, I should say that fifteen more years will be required to merge the traces of the disaster into the soil which is daily rising up around them in upper Casamicciola; the wrecked bathing establishment in the valley, with its ponderous masonry and hard stucco, will offer a longer resistance, particularly as nobody seems inclined to reoccupy this site.

The man who could tell the most blood-curdling tales of this calamity was the old guardian of the cemetery. He was *facile princeps* in this department and revelled in his great natural gifts.

"Yes, Signore, if I were to tell you all about the many poor Christians—the arms—the legs—Ah, Signore, if you had been here—why, under this very mound of cement (tapping the ground) they lie—(reassuringly) a few thousand of them at least

—no coffins, no spades, not even earth to cover them—unidentified and in the heat of summer—it became, you understand, intolerable—so we threw them in here and a tremendous load of lime and cement on the top of them—enough to crush down a regiment of soldiers—Ah, Signore, the poor Christians—it remained flat for a day or two, but you observe—(*tremolo agitato, con molto sentimento*) just where you are standing, I mean—the covering has risen. . . ."

Involuntarily you recoil a few paces.

He proceeds relentlessly:

"Even now, after all these years, they find them and bring them here for burial—Ah, Signore—in pieces, of course. . . ."

After such horrors, it is well to take a plunge in the sea and purge away in the liquid element the picture of man's frailty and unloveliness. The water at Ischia is irresistibly tempting, of crystal purity and unfrequented by devil-fish or other terrors. Once a year, maybe, a basking shark, an amiable monster, heaves in sight and paddles towards the shore in friendly curiosity; he generally receives a charge from a gun for his pains.

Or you may take a boat and sail—an afternoon's excursion—to the islet of Vivara, which may be regarded, with Procida, as a dependency of Ischia. There is no fear of shipwreck, for your Ischiote, save he of Forio, is a fine-weather sailor and the wealth of Crœsus would not tempt him into his boat if he can detect a ripple on the water. Nor need you fear starvation—the boatman, like all the islanders, has the gift of discovering relations in the most unlikely spots, and relationship counts for much hereabouts. Half of the wrecked crater of Vivara slumbers under the waves, but on the summit of the other portion lies a fair champaign, with oaks and carobs, vines and fruitful fields; a spacious farmhouse stands in the centre. A priest used to live here, with four or five women who helped him to till the ground. He was a passionate agriculturist. Once every two months he sailed to Procida to buy salt and cigars or a new spade; for the rest, the island produced timber and water, and milk and wine and oil, and corn and potatoes and salad, and rabbits and woodcock and quails—everything, in short, which he required for life. Fishermen brought him, in exchange for dispensations, the choicest red mullets, crabs, lampreys and other finned and crawling denizens of the deep and nothing ever troubled the calm tenor of his life, for he defended his domain with a shotgun and had seriously wounded several persons who ventured to set foot on it. He was never unfrocked, but his bishop thought him a little eccentric.

Such a state of things may constitute a scandal; yet this priest lived out his life according to his own recipe and preserved his health of body and peace of mind. He typified the South Italians who prate of mechanics but are true lovers of the soil and the key-note of whose nature is anti-asceticism. The antagonism of flesh and spirit, the most pernicious piece of crooked thinking which has ever oozed out of our poor deluded brain, is to this day unintelligible to them.

The old priest is still alive, though retired from Vivara. He might be questioned as to his views on Mormonism and phylloxera. Whether he would confirm all the stories that are told about his earlier life, is another matter. He would probably deny them, if untrue. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

The air on Vivara is ambrosial and I know of no place in this neighbourhood which I would rather choose as a hermitage than this calm and fruitful islet. The view is superb; it embraces all Campania. Far away, melting into the horizon, the sinuous outlines of the Tyrrhenian shores; the Ponza islands with their grim memories of Roman banishments; the legendary Cape of Circe; the Caudine Forks; the complex and serrated Apennines; the Elysian Fields, Tartarus and Cimmerian gloom; the smoking head of Vesuvius with its coral necklace of towns and villages. Ischia, in this evening light, is an immense dome of dark green foliage while, on the other side of the bay, the whole Sorrentine peninsula is bathed in a roseate splendour; the long-drawn shapely mountain looks like a thing of air, a gossamer exhalation. Not an inch of all this landscape but has its memories. Capua and Hannibal; Misenum and Virgil; Nisida and Lucullus; there Pompei, here Puteoli where the apostle Paul touched land; the venerable Acropolis of Cumæ confronts us; yonder Capri, firmly planted upon the waves near the hoary promontory of Athenæum, where stood the Siren temple and that of Minerva, wonders of the world.

There are many spots on earth as fair as the Bay of Naples—equally fair at least to us moderns, whose appreciation of nature and of art has become less exclusively human. The steaming Amazonian forests and the ice-crags of Jan Mayen appeal nowadays to our catholic taste; but whoever takes the antique point of view will still accord the palm to the Mediterranean. Here, true beauty resides with its harmony of form and hue—here the works of man stand out in just proportion to those of nature, each supplementing the other. Elsewhere, she becomes menacing; gloomy or monstrous. In the North, the sun refuses her aid and man struggles with the elements; he vegetates, an

animated lump of blubber and dirt, or rushes frantically in starving hordes to overrun the fair places of earth; in the tropics his works shrink into insignificance, he is crushed by the vegetation, sucked dry by the sun whom he execrates as a demon —he dwindles into a stoic, a slave.

Here then, start up old memories, like the fabled dragon brood of Cadmus, at our feet. At our feet lies Procida, a green expanse, its mighty castle rising like an enchantment out of the waves . . . *Dominus Johannes de Prochyta*. . . . How comes it that none of our scholars has written a monograph on him and the great Hohenstaufen, their aims and aspirations? Why does our reading public, so greedy of things Italian, know of him nothing save school-boy recollections of Sicilian Vespers? If they would turn aside from their *Cinque-cento* infatuation and forget for a while the squabbles of microscopic Tuscan princelings and the hallucinations of neurotic monks and carvers of saints, they would behold, in John of Procida, a MAN. They could watch how this man's character is drawn out, educed by adverse fortune, till he towers like a giant above his fellows and his age. More than this: they would be confronted by a phenomenon rare indeed in mediæval history—by a striving, by an ideal, that would do honour to themselves in this twentieth century.

Vengeance is mine, said the Jewish god who liked to keep all the good things for himself; but such was not the notion of *Dominus Johannes*. He tumbled the proudest prince in Christendom into a dishonoured grave, and the tremors of his splendid, sanctified hatred were felt from London to Constantinople. His ambition was the unity of Italy—a portent, a dream undreamed in that night of barbarism, a cry that none save the prophetic voice of Dante echoed down the centuries to come. This *medicus* was endowed with an astuteness and a tenacity that verge on the preternatural; he was no intriguer, but an independent statesman of singularly modern cast, who drove popes and kings and emperors the way he meant them to go. That transient gleam is the "wolf's tail" of our present political status; it pre-figures the triumph of reason over its hereditary enemies, monkery and militarism. It is easy to be modern nowadays though not all of us have discovered the secret; it was easy maybe at Rome or Nineveh or Cuzco or Samarkand; but to be modern under the sterilising, paralysing blight of European mediævalism was reserved for a few prodigies—martyrs rather, since most of them paid for this distinction with their blood. And even in this trivial matter of dying (is it indeed so trivial?)

John of Procida was singular. At a patriarchal age he expired in his bed; almost forgotten, as one historian remarks. Likely enough he was "almost forgotten." Mont Blanc does not show to full advantage from the *Grands Mulets*, and it takes a long distance of time to see *Dominus Johannes* in his true perspective. . . .

Or we might navigate round the whole island of Ischia, half-rowing, half-sailing: a day's trip, if carelessly lengthened out as it should be (for whoever takes account of time, need never hope to catch the *genius loci* of these regions). Nothing more delightful than this leisurely Homeric circumgyration.

It is only from the sea that one can realise how greatly the island might still be improved. If there were a road, for instance, along the shore from the town of Ischia to Lacco—what a promenade for gods and men! And this, they say, was the original design, but the present track was discovered to be a trifle cheaper and the engineers were bribed to carry it inland over a thousand hills and dales to suit the convenience of the landowners on either side. The old, old story: save the *soldi* and lose the *francs*.

Here at least, as we sail along, is something sensible, something modern. It is a stone reservoir at the water's edge, built to receive the excellent Serino drinking water which can be brought from Naples in specially constructed vessels.

But there is no Serino water in it.

Why?

The usual law-suit.

Let it not be imagined that such law-suits are against the wishes of either litigant; both of them are vastly enjoying the fun. Your South Italian is a born gambler—judicial proceedings and State lotteries are his chief forms of emotional stimulation—he would rather be beaten than not have a law-suit at all, and to inquire of him how his various "cases" are progressing is as natural as to ask how he has passed the night. Some persons, I was told, are foolishly protesting that the promised water is not at hand: as if the contractor's original and patriotic idea were to count for nothing! As if they had not their own gelid fountain, *Abocætus* yclept of old, which streams down, on cunningly contrived arches, from the heights overhead! * Let them protest a little longer! Let them thank God if they, or their children's children, ever taste a drop of

* In my Ischian days it terminated in a stone basin with four merry dolphins spouting water from their marble throats—now replaced by the usual cast-iron abomination. Neapolitans call this "being English."

that Serino water, seeing that there is no reason why a Neapolitan law-suit should ever end.

You will already have visited the castle-rock of Ischia, whose museum of mummified nuns, a grisly exhibition of life in death, is alone worth the trouble of coming to this island. It is altogether too improbably picturesque, this towering pinnacle of basalt; too theatrical, as Symonds rightly says, to be wholly artistic. And yet it was a fitting scene for the loves of Colonna and Pescara whose shades will for ever haunt those gloomy vaults. For theirs was an age of ardour and exaggeration, and it is not always easy to take seriously these passionate cut-throats and lovers whose very garments reflect their lack of sobriety: there is (*entre nous*) a smack of Offenbach about some of them. Let us now not omit to crawl into that subterranean chapel whose walls are adorned with fading Byzantine frescoes of austere beauty. How well they look, underground! How dim and far away are those men and creeds! Trajan and Pericles and Sardanapalus are of yesterday, in comparison.

Near at hand, in vine-wreathed seclusion, stands the mighty tower of St. Anna. Here may be seen mural paintings depicting the town and castle of Ischia in the olden days. This tower is never visited by tourists; it commands one of the finest prospects on the island and might no doubt be bought for a song if—if the usual law-suit were not pending as to its ownership.

The coast-scenery of Ischia is not as imposing as that of Capri but it has a rugged charm of its own; the tints are softer and more varied, and there are more genuine stretches of savagery. Capri is a microcosm whose perfection of *decor* and hieratic lineaments, wrought with the simplest and poorest materials, can only have been the inspiration of some divinely frenzied Prometheus. But its beauty, though vital and palpitating, is cramped; there is no room on Capri for long-drawn, smiling levels of shimmering sand, for uplands clad in leafy foliage, for lonely promontories like that of Cornacchia, a cataract of frozen lava tumbling in swarthy confusion into the waves.

Unlike Capri, this island can boast of few natural caverns. But the inhabitants supplement the deficiency by creating artificial ones where wine and other household paraphernalia are stored in the dry pumiceous earth, and where goats and goat-boys dream through the short summer nights. Sometimes you will notice one of them deserted without apparent cause; the goat-boy has seen the *munaciello* or popular domestic spirit, and resolutely refuses to spend another night in the haunted

spot. Loudly grumbling, the peasant excavates a new cave a few yards distant from the first and recommends him to sleep with his eyes shut. When he grows older, he will know better than to be frightened at this friendly and useful personage, who gives lucky numbers for the lottery and sometimes bare cash, and who is, or ought to be, consulted on all important family matters.

These old caverns, like deserted houses and empty cisterns, become invested with a supernatural glamour in the briefest space of time. Every one of them engenders a treasure-legend, though the natives are chary of supplying information on this head, fearing that the stranger may be versed in *l'arte* (magic) and thereby enabled to unseal the enchantment and raise the treasure for himself. Every one knows that in the cave yonder a fabulous hoard is buried. Three men went in one night and saw a heap of gold lying in a crevice, but the torch was blown out three times and . . . certain other things occurred ; one of them died soon afterwards. Ah, if they had only had the *book*, like that man in Fontana ! They found a sheep there on the mountain of Epomeo, a sheep of stone, which they dragged for fun into the village. And there it lay till one day a man, quite an ordinary *Napoletano*, arrived with a book under one arm and a sack under the other. He knew—he knew ! He just touched the sheep and it opened and a torrent of gold poured out which he put in his sack and away he went. Even educated natives, who have visited the University, speak of these things in a hushed whisper. An occasional discovery of real value may have fostered the growth of these legends ; in Campania, as in the "Arabian Nights," the ruins of an ancient civilisation with its subterraneous passages and marks of vanished pomp gave them verisimilitude and as it were a *locus standi ;* Naples is half-way to Baghdad, and no one quite understands the native character who has not lived in the East.

But this Oriental trait is only one of many that have been gradually superimposed upon one another. Whoever rightly deciphers the human palimpsest of the Parthenopean region, will perceive how faint are the traces of Greco-Roman schooling, how skin-deep the scars of mediæval tyranny and bestiality. And christianity has only left a translucent veneer upon the surface ; below, can be read the simple desire for sunshine and family life, and a pantheism vague and charming, the impress of nature in her mildest moods upon the responsive human phantasy. Our Gothic gloom and the sand-wastes of the East beget fearful gods and demons ; those of Campania, though equally

well accredited, are all in a manner sunny and humane, for the atmosphere is too limpid to permit the formation of terrifying spectres like those of Nurcia or even Beneventum. There are witches hereabouts, *giannare*, but they are just like ordinary women : there is nothing malefic or mysterious about them. As for the devil—did I tell you of the man who saw the devil last week ? He was walking up this very road, about sunset, and there was the devil sitting on a stone in front of him. What he looked like ? Oh, horns and hoofs and all the rest of it—nothing out of the way—just the devil, you know. Little they understand these people who imagine that superstitious dread plays any part in their daily lives ! They will tell stories of the devil, popularly known as Saint Pantaleone, because foreigners like to hear such things (foreigners being rather simple folks in some respects), but though they speak with fervour and conviction, they do not take him seriously. Dozens of houses are haunted by him and his imps, but, unlike many in our civilised countries, the rents do not fall and *Cristiani* live in them all the year round. It is the same with the saints. Every one of the Heavenly Host may be cheated at a bargain ; the Virgin and Her Son are adored with feasts and flowers, but to endeavour to imitate either of them would be considered a most unprofitable speculation. These illiterate Ischiote fishermen do not allow the supernatural to interfere in the main objects of existence—the direst fiend would not keep one of them out of a sea-cave, if there were half a franc's worth of crabs inside it. That German divine who lately traced, with some exasperation, Catholic institutions to their heathen origins, forgot to discover or probably to mention, that his own pseudo-rationalistic creed is far more deadly, as it infects those who lead the march of culture. Neapolitans shrug their shoulders at Saint Januarius, whose periodical liquefaction is a fine pretext for fireworks and military music, and—while the civilised world is appalled at the nuptials between the lord of a great *Kulturstaat* and the Antique Fraud—Catholicism in Naples, ever blithely serene and infantile, is gracefully expiring, its venerable frame suffused, dolphin-like, with all the iridescent tints of the bland Paganism whence it sprang. All this must be a matter of climate. New names will supplant old names but so long as the climate of Campania does not change, its religious beliefs—ceremonies, rather—will always cluster round radiant elemental powers of sun and ocean.

Such meditations lead straight, by a justifiable reaction, to the question of dinner. The peninsula of St. Angelo, joined to the mainland by a slender neck of sand, is a good place to halt ;

St. Angelo being St. Michael, the angel *par excellence*, the dragon-killer and Apollo of Christianity who winged his way westwards in the fifth century and settled upon cloudy peaks and promontories all over Europe. While we inspect the ruined tower on the summit, a memento of piratical invasions, the boatman ferrets out a daughter of his maternal grandmother's brother's stepson, and peremptorily commands her to prepare some eggs and salad and a *zuppa di pesce* and be quick about it because the Signore is hungry and apt to lose his temper on such occasions.

Copious libations may help to get the *zuppa di pesce* down, but it is a sadly overrated dish and compares unfavourably with the nobler Marseillaise *bouillabaisse*. But what can be expected, considering its ingredients? Green and golden scales, and elaborately designed dorsal fins, will satisfy neither a hungry man nor an epicure, and if Neapolitans pay untold sums for the showy Mediterranean sea-spawn, it only proves that they eat with their eyes, like children who prefer tawdry sweets to good ones. They have colour and shape, these fish of the inland sea, but not taste; their flesh is either flabby and slimy and full of bones in unauthorised places, or else they have no flesh at all—heads like Burmese dragons but no bodies attached to them; or bodies of flattened construction on the *magnum-in-parvo* principle, allowing of hardly room for a sheet of paper between their skin and ribs; or a finless serpentine framework, with long-slit eyes that leer at you while you endeavour to scratch a morsel off the reptilian anatomy. There is not a cod, or turbot, or whiting, or salmon, or herring in the two thousand miles between Gibraltar and Jerusalem; or if there is, it never comes out; its haddocks (haddocks, indeed!) taste as if they fed on decayed seaweed and had died from the effects of it; its lobsters have no claws; its oysters are bearded like pards, and as for its soles—I have yet to see one that measures more than 5 in. round the waist. The fact is, there is hardly a fish in the Mediterranean worth eating, and therefore, *ex nihilo nihil fit*. *Bouillabäisse* is only good because cooked by the French who, if they cared to try, could produce an excellent and nutritious substitute out of cigar-stumps and empty match-boxes. Truth will out, when a man is kept waiting for his dinner.

Ah, here is the wine at least. . . .

Perhaps the Signore would prefer a hen?

'No, thank you. I know these hens and how they are caught. This is the manner of it. The careful housewife singles out the scraggiest of her fowls, which forthwith stops eating and watches

her steadily with one eye, clearly aware of her intentions. The preliminary coaxing being of no avail (it is merely done for form's sake) five small boys are despatched in pursuit with sticks and stones. They begin by liking the job, for their prey, sure of victory, marches straight in front of them without deigning to look round, an easy mark for projectiles. One stone grazing its tail, it takes flight and settles in the vineyards on the hillside, amid howls of execration from the boys. Other pursuers are roused and join in the chase; a cloud of missiles envelops the bird as it gallops and flutters over stones and up trees, into gullies and thickets; the rabble vanishes from sight—you can hear them shouting a mile off. An hour or so having elapsed, the hen is seen, a speck on the horizon, flying down from the mountains in a straight line, pressed hard by an undaunted knot of pursuers. *Sant-Antonio!* It is going into the water like last year! And sure enough, it glides into the waves about three hundred yards from the shore and begins to preen its remaining feathers. May its children die unblest! May its mother be barren! The boat—the boat! At the very moment when the oar is about to descend with a crash upon the muscular frame of the victim, it rises like a lark and perches upon the roof of the church. *A chi t'è morto!* Out with the ladder! All work ceases in the village, the school is closed for the afternoon; the priest and the tobacconist, mortal enemies, are observed to exchange a few breathless words. Bed-ridden hags crawl into the piazza and ask whether there is an earthquake. No, the hen! The church! The Signore! The foreign Signore wants the hen—the hen on—the church! Just as the nimble *figlio di Luisella* has placed his foot upon the last rung of the ladder—*Ah, Santo Dio!* It has flown away, away into the brushwood, where none but the swiftest and surest-footed can hope to follow.

Towards Ave Maria it is carried in, vanquished. The conqueror, streaming with perspiration and followed by the entire populace, proudly holds it up for your inspection by one leg—the other is missing. A small boy, reluctantly, produces it from his pocket.

Is this a hen?

There is not a vestige of feathers on its body; the head, too, seems to have come off in the heat of the fray. The conqueror tells you that he could have shot it, but was afraid of spoiling its plumage. The careful housewife asks whether you will have it boiled or *al cacciatore?* What is left of the bird, looks as if it were already half cooked. . . .

There is a sound of grating sand in your ears and after an hour (as it seems) the familiar rocking movement ceases and the boat harshly strikes the shore. You open your eyes. The colours have faded out of things—it is evening.

"The Signore wished to sleep. He has slept for three hours. We are at San Montano. The Signore wished to bathe here."

It must have been that *zuppa di pesce;* or the sun. Or possibly the wine. True enough; it is the familiar valley of San Montano. We have missed seeing the Punta dell' Imperatore, and Citara, and Forio. . . .

"We will see them all to-morrow or some other day. Your Excellency is in no hurry."

No, his Excellency is in no hurry; haste is of the devil, the Turks say. His Excellency will proceed to wade cautiously into the still water, for who knows what filmy creatures may not crawl up from their caverns in a place like this and at such an hour?

A purple veil has fallen over all things. Fireflies are lighting those absurdly inadequate lanterns which they carry about, like the Chinese, for no conceivable reason, and far away, on the hillside yonder, a belated *cicadà* has yet to finish its daily task of instrumental music. No sound of waves is heard on this deserted beach; an overpowering fragrance of aromatic plants and warm earth exhales into the moonless summer night. . . .

Is it possible that on this lonesome shore, with its tufts of canes and shattered hovels, was the harbour—*the* harbour? There is not a trace of antiquity to be seen even by daylight, and in this dubious gloaming the mind, concentrated upon itself, is more than ever prone to distrust the reality of the historic record. It is all extremely improbable; the archæologists are taking us in, as usual. Who were these Greeks and Romans, if they ever lived? Their clothing was so and so; their houses thus. . . . Elusive shapes, none the less. The moment you endeavour to fix them upon the retina—they are gone, swallowed up in the murk. A black gulf yawns between them and ourselves; however clearly they wrought or thought, their personalities glide away from us with the phantasmagoric swiftness of a dream. Two faces peering at one another in the night through the windows of railway carriages. . . .

Yet we must allow ourselves to be convinced, even at San Montano. Vases and cinerary urns, and ancient coins and marbles, have been brought to light within a few feet of the surface. No doubt much soil has been washed down from the hills on either side since those days; the sea, too, must have

carried in sand and stones and thus helped to bury traces of ancient life here. Yet only a few days ago a fisherman drew up from the deep a classic amphora. It was encrusted with barnacles and other marine growths that covered, without concealing, its noble proportions. A foreigner bought it; he considered the amphora beautiful, and its encrustation "picturesque."

That was correctly stated. These sea-amphoras are, to my thinking, fit symbols of modern Campania and their comely image rises up before the mind's eye whenever, amid northern gloom, I remember those radiant shores and try to reconstruct their vanished glories. For barnacles are "picturesque"; dirt and superstition and villainy are "picturesque"; but it needs neither learning nor acumen to see through yesterday's growth the beauty of the antique form.

Georgiana

By Granville Barker

I

We were pacing round the moonlit lawn, my father-in-law and I, skirting always, by some curious instinct, the shadow of the big lime-tree which fell black across one corner. Suddenly a light appeared in an upper window of the house and a blind rattled down. "Mary has gone to bed without forgiving you," I said.

"Children," replied my father-in-law, "daughters especially, are always offended by their parents' heterodox opinions. Yes, we secretly admire revolution in a younger generation, it encourages us to think that the world is not ossifying after all, as we feel it to be, but in our fathers and mothers—no, no—indecent!"

"Well, I call Mary a little narrow-minded upon these questions, anyhow," I said.

"Womanhood," my father-in-law went on, picking his phrases carefully as was his wont, "is the Government in matters of sex. Change of opinion must lead logically to alteration of law. We men in perennial opposition may talk as wildly as we please." Then he began to flatten back his white beard under his chin, a sure sign, I had learned, that his mind was gymnastic. And we paced along rhythmically but in silence for a few moments.

"Yes," he went on, "women would always rather that a woman broke the law and suffered than that the law were called in question. So would the woman herself in nine cases out of ten. A woman takes punishment as no man will. A man spends ingenuity proving that he is right to yield to temptation. A woman will tell you quite plainly that she is going to do wrong and is prepared to suffer for it. I could tell you an interesting story to exemplify that. Shall I?"

"Do," I said.

"It's about myself too," said my father-in-law, "and it's how many years old? How old is Mary?"

"You ought to know," I protested, "but let us calculate. She was twenty-eight when Ted was born, and he'll be ten on the fifth of September."

"Then," said my father-in-law, "the story is thirty years old more or less. Yes, I'd been married nine years. Our offices were in Cannon Street then, but I was still the junior partner. We had become trustees for a certain estate in Wiltshire, of which the principal part was a very large farm, and it fell to me to make a quarterly visit there, to go through the books and settle questions of rent and one thing and the other. Now the farm was run—indeed the whole estate was run by a Miss—suggest a name."

I jumped.

"I can't tell you her real name. Suggest one."

"Nicholson," I said.

"By a Miss Nicholson. She lived with a married sister, who was something of an invalid, in the farmhouse, seven miles from anything like a hotel. So they used to put me up on my quarterly visits. Whether the sister was a widow or not I never really discovered. I gathered and imagined that she had somehow or other got rid of a blackguard of a husband who was responsible for the nervous breakdown, from which she was slowly recovering.

"Georgiana was a woman of thirty-five—yes, some years my senior. She was not a pretty woman, not even a handsome woman to look at, but a remarkable woman to talk to. And it was as she talked that her face acquired beauty. The mobility of her mouth was beautiful, and the knitting of her brows and the tension of the nostrils and the play of the lids over the eyes. This vitality seemed to make all she said uncommon. And it called out your vitality in return. You found yourself talking to her eagerly and sincerely even about the most commonplace things. She was rather tall and her figure was spare. She walked fast and rode well.

"At the end of each quarter there was always a day and a half's work to be done, sometimes more. I would go down to Wiltshire on a Saturday and very often it would be Wednesday morning before I could return. In the second year of our trusteeship there were extra visits to be paid too. It was about the end of that year that Miss Nicholson and I discovered that we had got to know each other fairly well. Intellectually—you see—it was a lonely life for her, there in the country. The estate kept only a part of her mind busy, and though her sister was nice enough it was a nature narrowed to a

certain emotional egotism by the distress of an unhappy marriage —no good material for a constant companion. So Georgiana made no show of not welcoming my visits. Our talks would be primarily of business but they were illuminated by the sense of humour we had in common; and business disposed of, they would take now one turn, now another. I wonder if there is anything more delightful in the world than good conversation. It is at its best between two, and between a man and a woman. Though then it is so seldom at its best. For there is apt to be that little cloud of sex attraction blurring the fine outlines—like pink water-colour smudged over a silver-point drawing. But Georgiana Nicholson and I were not at a callow age; we saw comparatively little of each other; this was at the beginning a business acquaintance, not one founded upon idleness or politeness, so that as we walked about those fields—. Do you know Wiltshire and how the grey-green Downs narrow the horizon and a brisk wind will blow down from them? Well, I enjoyed, as never before or since, the stimulus that insight into another being gives to one's own power of self-expression. Language is mankind's greatest invention; there's no doubt of that.

"I remember we had one sure point of argument to which all our subjects would turn. Like most young men I loved heterodoxy for its own sake; I was always ready with a lawless point of view. Like many women, she refused to pronounce judgment on a matter outside the scope of her own experience and when she judged, it was by the light of her experience. Off we'd go about the penalties of civilisation. It was a topic fruitful enough of instances. Georgiana had a love for wild birds and a great knowledge of them. I remember to this day how she brought me once to a sudden standstill to watch the swift dart and twirl of a water-wagtail devoting furious energy to satisfying the needs of a lumpish young cuckoo that clung vacant and helpless to an iron railing. It was pathetic to see the graceful little creature hovering to drop the hard-earned mash of flies and gnats into the gaping gullet of its foster-child. 'Yes,' said Georgiana, as we walked on, 'and somewhere about lie the starved corpses of two or three little wagtails, thrust out of their proper home by this incongruous, Brobdignagian stranger, on whom their proper mother is lavishing attention.' 'Norman Baron of a cuckoo,' I said, 'planting his children upon the proletariat for support!'

"And she was contemptuous of the farm beasts. Hadn't they suffered morally and physically too from civilisation?

"She declared that when she first came into the country she

discovered in the farmyard an epitome of the degradation of modern society. ' Consider the hopeless immorality of poultry,' she said. ' Greed, lust, oppression, cowardice, imbecility, offend you day after day in these cocks and hens that you have reclaimed from a state of nature. And though men and women may conceal their appetites with a little less honesty, do they differ otherwise ? '

" I held out though that men and women were capable of constant improvement and that the nineteenth century in its rush of industrial activity had raised the standard of life enormously. And I pointed out that in spite of incidental miseries the level of intelligence and morality was far higher in a modern city than it was—for instance—in that very part of Wiltshire.

" I remember the particular conversation which took this particular turn because it marked the real beginning of another state of things between us. We went on to talk of the simple code of honour and morals which obtained among the peasants there. It is dictated purely by convenience. You may get drunk on a Saturday because on Sunday you have time to sleep off the effects. You must not steal from your superiors or they will lock you up. Things which it would not be worth while to lock you up for stealing they have arranged to give you as part of your wages; firewood, for instance. You don't steal from your equals since they have nothing you don't possess yourself. No sane man would think of coveting his neighbour's wife when there are so many other women about, exactly like her. A girl gets married when she is going to have a baby and requires a home for it; not before as a rule. And if the prospective father should refuse to marry her—well, he'll get no more fun in that village, for he'll be held an unreliable person.

" I remember suggesting that this widely accepted custom might date from very early times, when the fruitfulness of a marriage was a matter of vital concern to the community, constantly depleted as it was by war and plague. Georgiana said that it had much to commend it anyway. She noticed the village girls no more coarse-minded or worse behaved for the amount of licence it involved, while it had the great advantage of precipitating marriages at the natural age for them. ' You don't meet hereabouts,' she said, ' at least among the labourers, the selfish vicious man of forty or that incomplete thing, the spinster of—' she paused just perceptibly and then concluded —' thirty-five. Now that's where the peasant woman's problem is so much simpler than ours,' she went on. 'Apart from middle-

class disapproval of freedom of that sort—you'd find we should brush that aside soon enough—it matters so much less to her whom she chooses as a lover and possible husband. She only requires a home and a father for her children, at the most a companion in some semi-animal sense of the word. But we, if you please, demand sympathy, community of taste, intellectual affinity, heaven knows what ; not to mention position, breeding and a decent income. Have you ever thought,' she said, 'of the three choices that are put before so many women who don't happen to drift through flirtation into matrimony in their twenties ? To lower even a very humbly conceived ideal of married life, to take unfair chances and face the degradation of clandestinity, or to feel oneself incomplete, growing stale, having to face this fate—that one will lose youth, miss maturity, to find only old age. Oh, there are compensations. The independent bachelor-woman of fifty is an inspiriting sight, but there has been a time when she rebelled against the loss of a natural, wholesome experience.'

"I forget how that talk finished. Possibly it was about at this point we arrived at the farmhouse in time for tea—to find Lucy, her sister, brooding comfortably over the urn. I remember, though, cogitating in the train next day upon what Georgiana had said and wondering how much she felt these things and how much she only thought them. Which proves that my own life was fairly full and complete and that I was satisfied enough with it—self-satisfied too, I daresay.

"On my next visit Georgiana started talking to me about myself. Our friendship was growing, you see. We talked of my children too ; of the sort of pleasure and pride and responsibility they really were and of the sort of pleasure and pride children were popularly supposed to be. And then—quite innocently—she tried to talk to me of my wife. Now, a man never talks about his wife. A drunken tramping tinker won't discuss his wife with you. And I remarked on this, and we wondered why women are more ready to discuss their husbands, preferably with other women, but even with men.

"That must have been nearly a year later—yes, it couldn't have been the next visit but one after I saw the young cuckoo fed. It's odd how inaccurate one's memory is, even when it is most vivid. Anyhow it was at the end of a September. There had been a rainy month, the early falling leaves had been beaten off the trees and the smell of autumn was all about. Then came back, while I was there, two or three days of high summer. But the land lay very still and peaceful. One caught none of the busy,

fever-heated excitement of July, when bird and beast and the grain in the field are just emerging triumphant from the struggle for existence. Nature seemed just content with the year's fruition.

"I had been there for two days and on the third there was a house to be visited which lay detached from the estate. So we spent the afternoon riding to it, by the fields and over the Downs. We were at our very friendliest, and in touch with the time and the place. The unlooked-for respite from winter seemed like the promise of a perfect world. Who would believe that evil and desolation could exist under such a sky! Talk of a hundred things sufficed us to express ourselves on the way there. The sun beat down, we rode slowly, and the flies, grown somnolent and stupid, gathered together for an Armageddon. I remember pulling a piece of bracken to fix over my horse's head and cutting my finger with the stringy stem of it. But coming back we galloped and galloped. One could spend on that some of the physical exhilaration that possessed one. I remember that as the horses slowed to a steep slope, snorting and sweating, we'd turn to smile at each other like two children. We were late for dinner—supper, I daresay they called it, and it was probably earlier than one would have it now. And I was tired, pleasantly tired; my body just fatigued enough for my brain and imagination to be set quite free. After dinner we sat and talked until Mrs. Merivale, as was her wont, went off to bed about half-past nine. Georgiana and I sat on and talked keenly, irresponsibly, until I suppose it must have seemed quite late. Then she got up and said good-night and I got up too, and we shook hands as usual. But suddenly she put her arm round my neck and kissed me full on the lips. Then she drew back a step or two, breathing rather quickly, her eyes wide. Then she turned and went out of the room, shutting the door sharply behind her.

"I stood stock still where she left me for fully five minutes I daresay; well, it seemed five minutes. I wasn't thinking of anything; I was just pleased, thoroughly pleased and happy. Then I sat down and felt inclined to laugh. Then I started to think—of Georgiana, and how awkward it was her having kissed me. Then I refused to think and let my imagination run away with me. I became very excited, I remember. I paced up and down that drawing-room. I stopped to look at myself a great many times in the mirror over the mantelpiece. But that must have made me think again. I wasn't the least bit in love with Georgiana and somehow I didn't believe that in any mawkish

or uncomfortable sense of the word she was in love with me. But we had been mentally attracted towards each other and had not feared to show it. And now she had felt physically attracted to me and had not been ashamed to show that either. And I felt responsive : that goes without saying. Then I thought of my wife and became vexed and irritated with myself, and very cross with Georgiana. But that didn't last. The thought of Georgiana brought me pleasure—real emotional pleasure. And at this point, I remember distinctly leaning upon the mantelpiece, looking in the glass and carrying on a deliberate conversation with that second self which we can all call up at times, which was now being semi-obscurely visualised for me in the reflected lamplight. I had a long and most interesting argument with the man in the mirror. After a preliminary skirmish it turned mainly upon my sudden assertion of the right of every human being to a dual existence, one workaday, one of the imagination. And the question was : how far and in what direction that right extended. I pointed out that sometimes the life of the imagination took concrete form, that this Wiltshire episode was such an instance in mine. How entirely detached it was from my ordinary life ! There was not a connecting-link except the formal one of my office. If I had assumed a different name in coming down here I should be, to all intents and purposes, a different man. Why might I not detach my body as I had already detached my mind and live this life to the full, grateful that it had been added to me, not meanly shirking experience, or worse, enjoying it fruitlessly in imagination ? All that he could urge against this was that I should feel differently about it in the morning. That was no argument, I retorted, and abruptly closed the discussion by flinging myself into an arm-chair.

" I thought of my wife again and then deliberately, wilfully put her out of my mind. However, I had but to let things stay as they were now, and temptation might end. I should see Georgiana in the morning for half an hour before I caught my train. She would almost certainly make no reference to what she had done. I suspected she might even now be repenting of it. But then that notion angered and pained me. Whatever else might happen I couldn't bear to think of her repenting her feelings and the kiss in which she had confessed them. I felt sure she was of a greater nature than that.

" But I thought, too, of the jolly friendship between us, of the communion of minds, which is so rare and which was very precious to me. I had all along known and told myself in the most commonplace way how precious. I didn't want to-night

or any consequence of to-night to spoil it. I was quite certain of that. Then I said that was mere meanness and cowardice. Why should one beauty in one's life drive out another ? That only happened to little natures, too fragile to contain the gifts that Fate gave. And one must never proceed on the assumption that one's nature is little. But I should think differently in the morning. Then I should have no imagination but only the world's experience framed as convention to colour my judgment. I should not approve of taking risks then.

" I believe I should have picked up a book, gone to bed, and read myself to sleep as if nothing had happened, if all at once the feeling of Georgiana's kiss upon my lips had not come over me again. It came upon me so strongly that I shut my eyes and, leaning back, shivered a little. I looked at the door, longing for it to open, and for her to come back. I thought I did hear some one in the passage. I sat up tensely. I felt full of life and happiness. She had challenged my manhood by that kiss and no man could refuse the challenge. It came upon me with certainty that whatever the consequences I should be ashamed and regretful all my life if I went back now upon the impulse which seemed so natural and good.

" The door did open, but it was only the old servant who came in. I realised it must be late.

" ' I'm just going to bed,' I said. ' Shall I put out the lamp ? ' and she answered : ' Yes, if I so kindly would,' and went away.

" I lit my candle and went upstairs. I knew that I had to pass Georgiana's room. There was a light in it, which shone under the door. I stopped. There seemed no sound in the house at all. Then I knocked gently but deliberately. There was no answer. I waited and raised my hand to knock again. But suddenly a shyness—a real boyish shyness—overcame me. I dropped my hand and passed on, towards my own room. Before I reached it her door had opened. I turned quickly and found now that I was shaking all over. But nothing more happened ; only the light shone across the passage. Then I went back.

" She was standing by a dressing-table ; her hair down, and by its look and a brush in her hand she had been brushing it when I knocked. She wore some long white dressing-gown and her bare feet were in blue slippers, I remember. I went into the room. She didn't speak or move, just stood looking at me with her lips a little parted. I shut the door and put my candle down. Then she closed her eyes for a moment and moved her head slightly away. I was inarticulate and still trembling a little. I moved towards her to take her in my arms—a little

clumsily and roughly I daresay. She put out a hand to stop me, and said, 'No, not that. Not like that at least.'

"I caught her hand and kissed it, went on kissing it, foolishly, till she smiled.

"She called me by my name, then repeated it, then repeated it again. I think she let me kiss her. I know her face was like a child's. We stood there, close to each other, for a long time saying nothing more.

"Suddenly she began to question me as to what I was thinking of it all, of her, of myself. She hardly waited for me to answer, but went on to explain, disconnectedly but very clearly, all that she felt and thought about it. How it was only between my last visit and this, she had discovered that our casual companionship was no longer expressing what she felt for me. How she had told herself that beyond this point I was another woman's property and then how unreal that had seemed, how she had laughed at the idea. She tried, with much apparent contradiction, to be very explicit about herself and her motives. 'I can't say I have wrestled with temptation,' she said, 'because I wouldn't look on it as temptation. How can the same hopes and desires be the outcome of all that is good in us under one set of circumstances and the work of the devil under another?' She said she had been putting what she wanted to the test of its usefulness. Need one belittle one's most vital impulses more than that? 'I'm not content to die an old maid,' she said. 'There are depths in my nature I must sound; there are things in my character I must develop and understand if I'm to express in my life all that I'm capable of expressing. I will not be incomplete. For the last year I have been noticing in myself little intolerances, here and there a little lack of response to Nature's sense of humour; things that I have done and said and thought, trivial in themselves, comic I daresay—that's the worse of it—to people young or mature, who are keeping pace with life. But I have come up to this room and shed tears of bitter shame and rebellion about them. I don't believe in the beauties of virginity, of self-limitation. I don't want to become fastidious and thin-lipped. Some people are afraid of their natural appetites. I'm not. I want to realise to the full all that I'm capable of—good or bad; and I will. What's the use of half a woman in this world? And it isn't any vague, poetic, modern copybook desire for motherhood—though I'm fond of children and it would be right and natural for me to have children of my own. I want you for my lover and that's the truth,' she finished, quite simply.

" Then she went on to discover and discuss my point of view in the matter; and while it was so different yet it was so like the swift candid talks we were used to having on impersonal things. This talk was as unselfconscious as ever those were, just because, perhaps, we spoke with such fearless intimacy.

" ' Well,' she said, ' it would have been more tactful of me to have fallen in love with a man I could have married. As I haven't, so much the worse for me perhaps. But you have things to think of besides my wants and needs, and people to think of besides yourself, and now I suppose we had better think of them.'

" She then asked me plump out how I felt towards her, how cheaply I held her. I remember that I began to protest, but she stopped me by saying, ' I know how hard it is to speak the truth about a thing of this sort, but I wish you'd try. I'm not in the least afraid of it.'

" So I tried, and it sounded far less mean and shuffling than I feared it would. I said straight away that I valued my wife and my home, and didn't want to leave them for her, and she exclaimed in amazement at the bare possibility of my doing such a foolish and blackguardly thing. I confessed to the rather twopence-coloured view of myself as a sexual bravo that I had conjured up downstairs. This made her laugh. She began this, she said, and was quite capable of stopping it at any moment. I was glad to tell her I wanted nothing to spoil our friendship. She bent over and kissed my forehead at that. ' We must gain,' she said, ' not lose by knowing each other better.' We spoke of the future. She told me of her belief that no man and woman could come together without feeling, if only at that moment, that it was for an eternity. I agreed and said (as I think still) that though people complain of the marriage service with its sickness and health and ' death do us part,' yet it represents only the minimum of what husband and wife demand of each other. So we put to ourselves our own case. How well I remember her telling me that if and when we came to separation I should suffer more than she, unlikely as that might seem. She told me of her unbounded faith in the future as long as she never betrayed the present. It was all her religion she said. If you do fearlessly what you must do to-day, strength for to-morrow will be added unto you.

" But through all our talk there remained unsolved the question for me of my wife and my home, my daily life. We came back to it again and again.

" ' We shall be doing wrong,' she said. ' Let us face that fact at once.

"I urged that my wife need never know.

"'It's a great risk,' said Georgiana. 'Don't be blind to it. And that isn't all. I can imagine a character that will remain unspoiled by deceit—deceit forced on it by petty considerations; but have you that character? Can you digest sin, my dear, or will our loving only help you to a heavy conscience? I can't decide on this part of the matter. I own that I am ready to do wrong. I wish it were not wrong. But for everything I have ever wanted there has seemed to be the risk of unhappiness to some person in the getting it. Sometimes no one has noticed it, sometimes as now the Law has made a point of it and called it an ugly name. But I have always noticed it and I have always prayed to God to let me bear the consequences myself. And if the moral story-books were right and the sinner did always bear the consequences of his sin I could have gone through my life quite untroubled, never doubting what to do. But that is a prayer God mocks at you for, nine times out of ten; and God's mockery makes one a conscientious coward, doesn't it?' She laughed a little at her epigram and went on: 'Even this is sophistry; I'm not acting so much from reason as I try to make out. I want you and I'm impatient at this obstacle. I'll break through it, right or wrong, no matter who suffers, if only you are content to; but only if you are content to. And I don't want to tempt you or beg you. I only want you to know just how much I want this and then to choose.'

"I think that represents fairly enough what she said. I smile now as I remember it. But I don't think she realised in the least how incapable of choice I was, or any other man would have been at that moment. I told her I chose to sin. I think I said I should feel a lesser man if I left her now.

"'Take time, oh, take time,' she answered. 'Don't speak for a minute or two. Wait—wait.'

"We were sitting before the fire now: she in a big grandfather chair; I, low down, close beside her.

"I waited; we neither of us spoke. Then I stretched my arms towards her and leant my head on her knees, kissing them. She lifted my head and kissed me on the lips, many times.

"I don't know how long we sat by the fire after that or what we said. Nothing at all rational I daresay. But I know I melted into a knowledge of her, which showed me what a thieving strangerhood even my most daring thoughts of intimacy with her had been. We spoke like children—were grave without reason and then merry, as children are. I know it struck me again how childish she looked. She held my two hands. I remember

her holding them to the firelight, then kissing them, then pressing her own fingers gently upon them. What a wonderful thing, she said, was the curious live texture of flesh, the yielding of the bones, the warmth of the blood.

" All at once my candle, somewhere behind us, being burnt to its socket, went out with a loud gutter, which made us jump and then laugh.

" ' I'll get you another,' she said and got up to light one that stood on her dressing-table.

" ' Am I to go ? ' I asked.

" ' It must be very late, mustn't it ? ' She looked round at me and then away.

" ' May I come back ? '

" Her hand shook just a little as she was lighting the fresh candle.

" I asked again, ' May I come back ? '

" ' Yes, come,' she said, and put out both her hands to me.

(*To be continued*)

Some Reminiscences

By Joseph Conrad

III

The devouring in a dismal forest of a luckless Lithuanian dog by my Grand-uncle Nicholas B., in company of two other military and desolate scarecrows, symbolised, to my childish imagination, the whole horror of the retreat from Moscow and the immorality of a conqueror's ambition. An extreme distaste for that objectionable episode has tinged the views I hold as to the character and achievements of Napoleon the Great. I need not say that these are unfavourable, for, obviously, it was morally reprehensible for that great captain to induce a simple-minded Polish gentleman to eat dog by raising in his breast a false hope of national independence. It has been the fate of that credulous nation to starve for upwards of a hundred years on a diet of false hopes and—well—dog. It is, when one thinks of it, a singularly poisonous regimen. Some pride in the national constitution which has survived a long course of such dishes is really excusable. But enough of generalising. Returning to particulars, Mr. Nicholas B. confided to his sister-in-law (my grandmother) in his misanthropically laconic manner that this supper in the woods had been nearly "the death of him." This is not surprising. What surprises me is that the story was ever heard of; for Grand-uncle Nicholas differed in this from the generality of military men of Napoleon's time (and perhaps of all time) that he did not like to talk of his campaigns, which began at Friedland and ended somewhere in the neighbourhood of Bar-le-Duc. His admiration of the great Emperor was unreserved in everything but expression. Like the religion of earnest men, it was too profound a sentiment to be displayed before a world of little faith. Apart from that he seemed as completely devoid of military anecdotes as though he had hardly ever seen a soldier in his life. Proud of his decorations earned before he was twenty-five, he refused to wear the ribbons at the buttonhole in the manner practised to this day in Europe and even was unwilling to display the insignia on

festive occasions as though he wished to conceal them in the fear of appearing boastful. "It is enough that I have them," he used to mutter. In the course of thirty years they were seen on his breast only twice—at an auspicious marriage in the family and at the funeral of an old friend. That the wedding which was thus honoured was not the wedding of my mother I learned only late in life, too late to bear a grudge against Mr. Nicholas B., who made amends at my birth by a long letter of congratulation containing the following prophecy: "He will see better times." Even in his embittered heart there lived a hope. But he was not a true prophet.

He was a man of strange contradictions. Living for many years in his brother's house, the home of many children, a house full of life, of animation, noisy with a constant coming and going of many guests, he kept his habits of solitude and silence. Considered as obstinately secretive in all his purposes, he was in reality the victim of a most painful irresolution in all matters of civil life. Under his taciturn, phlegmatic behaviour was hidden a faculty of passionate anger. I suspect he had no talent for narrative; but it seemed to afford him sombre satisfaction to declare that he was the last man to ride over the bridge of the river Elster after the battle of Leipsic. Lest some construction favourable to his valour should be put on the fact he condescended to explain how it came to pass. It seems that long after the retreat began he was sent back to the town where some divisions of the French Army (and amongst them the Polish corps of Prince Joseph Poniatowski), jammed hopelessly in the streets, were being simply exterminated by the troops of the Allied Powers. When asked what it was like in there Mr. Nicholas B. muttered the only word "Shambles." Having delivered his message to the Prince he hastened away at once to render an account of his mission to the superior who had sent him. By that time the advance of the enemy had enveloped the town, and he was shot at from houses and chased all the way to the river bank by a disorderly mob of Austrian Dragoons and Prussian Hussars. The bridge had been mined early in the morning and his conviction was that the sight of the horsemen converging from many sides in the pursuit of his person alarmed the officer in command of the sappers and caused the premature firing of the charges. He had not gone more than 200 yards on the other side when he heard the sound of the fatal explosions. Mr. Nicholas B. concluded his bald narrative with the word "Imbecile" uttered with the utmost deliberation. It testified to his indignation at the loss of so many thousands of

lives. But his phlegmatic physiognomy lighted up when he spoke of his only wound, with something resembling satisfaction. You will see that there was some reason for it when you learn that he was wounded in the heel. "Like his Majesty the Emperor Napoleon himself," he reminded his hearers with affected indifference. There can be no doubt that the indifference was affected, if one thinks what a very distinguished sort of wound it was. In all the history of warfare there are, I believe, only three warriors publicly known to have been wounded in the heel—Achilles and Napoleon—demi-gods indeed—to whom the familial piety of an unworthy descendant adds the name of the simple mortal, Nicholas B.

The Hundred Days found Mr. Nicholas B. staying with a distant relative of ours, owner of a small estate in Galicia. How he got there across the breadth of an armed Europe and after what adventures I am afraid will never be known now. All his papers were destroyed shortly before his death; but if there was amongst them, as he affirmed, a concise record of his life, then I am pretty sure it did not take up more than a half-sheet of foolscap or so. This relative of ours happened to be an Austrian officer, who had left the service after the battle of Austerlitz. Unlike Mr. Nicholas B., who concealed his decorations, he liked to display his honourable discharge in which he was mentioned as *unschreckbar* (fearless) before the enemy. No conjunction could seem more unpromising, yet it stands in the family tradition that these two got on very well together in their rural solitude.

When asked whether he had not been sorely tempted to make his way again to France and join the service of his beloved Emperor, Mr. Nicholas B. used to mutter: "No money. No horse. Too far to walk."

The fall of Napoleon and the ruin of national hopes affected adversely the character of Mr. Nicholas B. He shrank from returning to his province. But for that there was also another reason. Mr. Nicholas B. and his brother—my maternal grandfather—had lost their father early, while they were quite children. Their mother, young still and left very well off, married again a man of great charm and of an amiable disposition but without a penny. He turned out an affectionate and careful step-father; it was unfortunate though that while directing the boys' education and forming their character by wise counsel he did his best to get hold of the fortune by buying and selling land in his own name and investing capital in such a manner as to cover up the traces of the real ownership. It seems that such practices can be

successful if one is charming enough to dazzle one's own wife permanently and brave enough to defy the vain terrors of public opinion. The critical time came when the elder of the boys on attaining his majority in the year 1811 asked for the accounts and some part at least of the inheritance to begin life upon. It was then that the step-father declared with calm finality that there were no accounts to render and no property to inherit. The whole fortune was his very own. He was very good-natured about the young man's misapprehension of the true state of affairs, but of course felt obliged to maintain his position firmly. Old friends came and went busily, voluntary mediators appeared travelling on most horrible roads from the most distant corners of the three provinces ; and the Marshal of the Nobility (*ex-officio* guardian of all well-born orphans) called a meeting of landowners to "ascertain in a friendly way how the misunderstanding between X and his step-sons had arisen and devise proper measures to remove the same." A deputation to that effect visited X, who treated them to excellent wines, but absolutely refused his ear to their remonstrances. As to the proposals for arbitration he simply laughed at them ; yet the whole province must have been aware that fourteen years before, when he married the widow, all his visible fortune consisted (apart from his social qualities) in a smart four-horse turn-out with two servants, with whom he went about visiting from house to house ; and as to any funds he might have possessed at that time their existence could only be inferred from the fact that he was very punctual in settling his modest losses at cards. But by the magic power of stubborn and constant assertion, there were found presently, here and there, people who mumbled that surely "there must be something in it." However, on his next name-day (which he used to celebrate by a great three-days' shooting-party), of all the invited crowd only two guests turned up, distant neighbours of no importance ; one notoriously a fool, and the other a very pious and honest person but such a passionate lover of the gun that on his own confession he could not have refused an invitation to a shooting-party from the devil himself. X met this manifestation of public opinion with the serenity of an unstained conscience. He refused to be crushed. Yet he must have been a man of deep feeling, because, when his wife took openly the part of her children, he lost his beautiful tranquillity, proclaimed himself heart-broken and drove her out of the house, neglecting in his grief to give her enough time to pack her trunks.

This was the beginning of a lawsuit, an abominable marvel

of chicane, which by the use of every legal subterfuge was made to last for many years. It was also the occasion for a display of much kindness and sympathy. All the neighbouring houses flew open for the reception of the homeless. Neither legal aid nor material assistance in the prosecution of the suit were ever wanting. X, on his side, went about shedding tears publicly over his step-children's ingratitude and his wife's blind infatuation; but as at the same time he displayed great cleverness in the art of concealing material documents (he was even suspected of having burnt a lot of historically interesting family papers), this scandalous litigation had to be ended by a compromise lest worse should befall. It was settled finally by a surrender, out of the disputed estate, in full satisfaction of all claims, of two villages with the names of which I do not intend to trouble my readers. After this lame and impotent conclusion neither the wife nor the stepsons had anything to say to the man who had presented the world with such a successful example of self-help based on character, determination and industry; and my great-grandmother, her health completely broken down, died a couple of years later in Carlsbad. Legally secured by a decree in the possession of his plunder, X regained his wonted serenity and went on living in the neighbourhood in a comfortable style and in apparent peace of mind. His big shoots were fairly well attended again. He was never tired of assuring people that he bore no grudge for what was past; he protested loudly of his constant affection for his wife and step-children. It was true he said that they had tried their best to strip him as naked as a Turkish saint in the decline of his days; and because he had defended himself from spoliation, as anybody else in his place would have done, they had abandoned him now to the horrors of a solitary old age. Nevertheless, his love for them survived these cruel blows. And there might have been some truth in his protestations. Very soon he began to make overtures of friendship to his eldest step-son, my maternal grandfather; and when these were peremptorily rejected he went on renewing them again and again with characteristic obstinacy. For years he persisted in his efforts at reconciliation, promising my grandfather to execute a will in his favour if he only would be friends again to the extent of calling now and then (it was fairly close neighbourhood for these parts, forty miles or so), or even of putting in an appearance for the great shoot on the name-day. My grandfather was an ardent lover of every sport. His temperament was as free from hardness and animosity as can be imagined. Pupil of the liberal-minded Benedictines who directed the only

public school of some standing then in the south, he had also read deeply the authors of the eighteenth century. In him Christian charity was joined to a philosophical indulgence for the failings of human nature. But the memory of these miserably anxious early years, his young man's years robbed of all generous illusions by the cynicism of the sordid lawsuit, stood in the way of forgiveness. He never succumbed to the fascination of the great shoot; and X, his heart set to the last on reconciliation with the draft of the will ready for signature kept by his bedside, died intestate. The fortune thus acquired and augmented by a wise and careful management passed to some distant relatives whom he had never seen and who even did not bear his name.

Meantime the blessing of general peace descended upon Europe. Mr. Nicholas B., bidding good-bye to his hospitable relative, the "fearless" Austrian officer, departed from Galicia, and without going near his native place, where the odious lawsuit was still going on, proceeded straight to Warsaw and entered the army of the newly constituted Polish kingdom under the sceptre of Alexander I., Autocrat of all the Russias.

This kingdom, created by the Vienna Congress as an acknowledgment to a nation of its former independent existence, included only a few central provinces of the old Polish patrimony. A brother of the Emperor, the Grand Duke Constantine (Pavlovitch), its Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief, married, morganatically, to a Polish lady to whom he was fiercely attached, extended this affection to what he called "My Poles" in a capricious and savage manner. Sallow in complexion with a Tartar physiognomy, and fierce little eyes, he walked with his fists clenched, his body bent forward, darting suspicious glances from under an enormous cocked hat. His intelligence was limited and his sanity itself was doubtful. The hereditary taint expressed itself, in his case, not by mystic leanings as in his two brothers, Alexander and Nicholas (in their various ways, for one was mystically liberal and the other mystically autocratic), but by the fury of an uncontrollable temper which generally broke out in disgusting abuse on the parade ground. He was a passionate militarist and an amazing drill-master. He treated his Polish Army as a spoiled child treats a favourite toy, except that he did not take it to bed with him at night. It was not small enough for that. But he played with it all day and every day, delighting in the variety of pretty uniforms and in the fun of incessant drilling. This childish passion, not for war but for mere militarism, achieved a desirable result. The Polish Army, in its equipment, in its armament and in its

battle-field efficiency, as then understood, became, by the end of the year 1830, a first-rate tactical instrument. Polish peasantry (not serfs) served in the ranks by enlistment, and the officers belonged mainly to the smaller nobility. Mr. Nicholas B., with his Napoleonic record, had no difficulty in obtaining a lieutenancy, but the promotion in the Polish Army was slow, because, being a separate organisation, it took no part in the wars of the Russian Empire either against Persia or Turkey. Its first campaign, against Russia itself, was to be its last. In 1831, on the outbreak of the Revolution, Mr. Nicholas B. was senior captain of his regiment. Some time before he had been made head of the remount establishment quartered outside the kingdom in our southern provinces, whence almost all the horses for the Polish cavalry were drawn. For the first time since he went away from home at the age of eighteen to begin his military life by the battle of Friedland, Mr. Nicholas B. breathed the air of the "Border," his native air. Unkind fate was lying in wait for him amongst the scenes of his youth. At the first news of the rising in Warsaw all the remount establishment, officers, vets., and the very troopers, were put promptly under arrest and hurried off in a body beyond the Dnieper to the nearest town in Russia proper. From there they were dispersed to the distant parts of the Empire. On this occasion poor Mr. Nicholas B. penetrated into Russia much farther than he ever did in the times of Napoleonic invasion, if much less willingly. Astrakan was his destination. He remained there three years, allowed to live at large in the town but having to report himself every day at noon to the military commandant, who used to detain him frequently for a pipe and a chat. It is difficult to form a just idea of what a chat with Mr. Nicholas B. could have been like. There must have been much compressed rage under his taciturnity, for the commandant communicated to him the news from the theatre of war and this news was such as it could be, that is, very bad for the Poles. Mr. Nicholas B. received them with outward phlegm, but the Russian showed a warm sympathy for his prisoner. "As a soldier myself I understand your feelings. You, of course, would like to be in the thick of it. By heavens! I am fond of you. If it were not for the terms of the military oath I would let you go on my own responsibility. What difference could it make to us one more or less of you?"

At other times he wondered with simplicity.

"Tell me, Nicholas Stepanovitch"—(my great-grandfather's name was Stephen and the commandant used the Russian form

of polite address)—" tell me why is it that you Poles are always looking for trouble ? What else could you expect from running up against Russia ? "

He was capable, too, of philosophical reflections.

" Look at your Napoleon now. A great man. There is no denying it that he was a great man as long as he was content to thrash those Germans and Austrians and all those nations. But no ! He must go to Russia looking for trouble, and what's the consequence ? Such as you see me, I have rattled this sabre of mine on the pavements of Paris."

After his return to Poland Mr. Nicholas B. described him as a " worthy man but stupid," whenever he could be induced to speak of the conditions of his exile. Declining the option offered him to enter the Russian Army he was retired with only half the pension of his rank. His nephew (my uncle and guardian) told me that the first lasting impression on his memory as a child of four was the glad excitement reigning in his parents' house on the day when Mr. Nicholas B. arrived home from his detention in Russia.

Every generation has its memories. The first memories of Mr. Nicholas B. might have been shaped by the events of the last partition of Poland, and he lived long enough to suffer from the last armed rebellion in 1863, an event which affected the future of all my generation and has coloured my earliest impressions. His brother, in whose house he had sheltered for some seventeen years his misanthropical timidity before the commonest problems of life, having died in the early fifties, Mr. Nicholas B. had to screw his courage up to the sticking-point and come to some decision as to the future. After a long and agonising hesitation he was persuaded at last to take on lease some fifteen hundred acres out of the estate of a friend in the neighbourhood. The terms of the lease were very advantageous, but the retired situation of the village and a plain comfortable house in good repair were, I fancy, the greatest inducements. He lived there quietly for about ten years, seeing very few people and taking no part in the public life of the province, such as it could be under an arbitrary bureaucratic tyranny. His character and his patriotism were above suspicion ; but the organisers of the rising in their frequent journeys up and down the province scrupulously avoided coming near his house. It was generally felt that the repose of the old man's last years ought not to be disturbed. Even such intimates as my paternal grandfather, a comrade-in-arms during Napoleon's Moscow campaign and later on a fellow officer in the Polish Army, refrained from visiting his crony as the date of the outbreak approached.

My paternal grandfather's two sons and his only daughter were all deeply involved in the revolutionary work; he himself was of that type of Polish squire whose only ideal of patriotic action was to "get into the saddle and drive them out." But even he agreed that "dear Nicholas must not be worried." All this considerate caution on the part of friends, both conspirators and others, did not prevent Mr. Nicholas B. being made to feel the misfortunes of that ill-omened year.

Less than forty-eight hours after the beginning of the rebellion in that part of the country, a squadron of scouting Cossacks passed through the village and invaded the homestead. Most of them remained formed between the house and the stables, while several, dismounting, ransacked the various outbuildings. The officer in command, accompanied by two men, walked up to the front door. All the blinds on that side were down. The officer told the servant who received him that he wanted to see his master. He was answered that the master was away from home, which was perfectly true.

I follow here the tale as told afterwards by the servant to my grand-uncle's friends and relatives, and as I have heard it repeated.

On receiving this answer the Cossack officer, who had been standing in the porch, stepped into the house.

"Where is the master gone then?"

"Our master went to J——" (the government town some fifty miles off), the day before yesterday."

"There are only two horses in the stables. Where are the others?"

"Our master always travels with his own horses" (meaning: not by post). "He will be away a week or more. He was pleased to mention to me that he had to attend to some business in the Civil Court."

While the servant was speaking the officer looked about the hall. There was a door facing him, a door to the right and a door to the left. The officer chose to enter the room on the left and ordered the blinds to be pulled up. It was Mr. Nicholas B.'s study with a couple of tall bookcases, some pictures on the walls, and so on. Besides the big centre table, with books and papers, there was a quite small writing-table with several drawers, standing between the door and the window in a good light; and at this table my grand-uncle usually sat either to read or write.

On pulling up the blind the servant was startled by the discovery that the whole male population of the village was massed in front, trampling down the flower-beds. There were

also a few women amongst them. He was glad to observe the village priest (of the Orthodox Church) coming up the drive. The good man in his haste had tucked up his cassock as high as the top of his boots.

The officer had been looking at the backs of the books in the bookcases. Then he perched himself on the edge of the centre-table and remarked easily.

"Your master did not take you to town with him, then."

"I am the head servant and he leaves me in charge of the house. It's a strong, young chap that travels with our master. If—God forbid—there was some accident on the road he would be of much more use than I."

Glancing through the window he saw the priest arguing vehemently in the thick of the crowd, which seemed subdued by his interference. Three or four men, however, were talking with the Cossacks at the door.

"And you don't think your master has gone to join the rebels maybe—eh?" asked the officer.

"Our master would be too old for that surely. He's well over seventy and he's getting feeble too. It's some years now since he's been on horseback and he can't walk much either now."

The officer sat there swinging his leg, very quiet as if indifferent. By that time the peasants who had been talking with the Cossack troopers at the door had been permitted to get into the hall. One or two more left the crowd and followed them in. They were seven in all and amongst them the blacksmith, an ex-soldier. The servant appealed deferentially to the officer.

"Won't your honour be pleased to tell the people to go back to their homes? What do they want to push themselves into the house like this for? It's not proper for them to behave like this while our master's away and I am responsible for everything here."

The officer only laughed a little, and after a while inquired:

"Have you any arms in the house?"

"Yes. We have. Some old things."

"Bring them all, here, on to this table."

The servant made another attempt to obtain protection.

"Won't your honour tell these chaps . . . ?"

But the officer looked at him in silence in such a way that he gave it up at once and hurried off to call the pantry-boy to help him collect the arms. Meantime the officer walked slowly through all the rooms in the house, examining them attentively

but touching nothing. The peasants in the hall fell back and took off their caps when he passed through. He said nothing whatever to them. When he came back to the study all the arms to be found in the house were lying on the table. There was a pair of big flint-lock holster pistols from Napoleonic times, two cavalry swords, one of the French the other of the Polish Army pattern, with a fowling-piece or two.

The officer, opening the window, flung out pistols, swords and guns, one after another, and his troopers ran to pick them up. The peasants in the hall, encouraged by his indifference, had stolen after him into the study. He gave not the slightest sign of being conscious of their existence and, his business being apparently concluded, strode out of the house without a word. Directly he left, the peasants in the study put on their caps and began to smile at each other.

The Cossacks rode away, passing through the yards of the home farm straight into the fields. The priest, still arguing with the peasants, moved gradually down the drive and his earnest eloquence was drawing the silent mob after him, away from the house. This justice must be rendered to the parish priests of the Greek Church that, strangers to the country as they were (being all drawn from the interior of Russia), the majority of them used such influence as they had over their flocks in the cause of peace and humanity. True to the spirit of their calling, they tried to soothe the passions of the excited peasantry and opposed rapine and violence whenever they could, with all their might. And this conduct they pursued against the express wishes of the authorities. Later on some of them were made to suffer for this disobedience by being removed abruptly to the far north or sent away to Siberian parishes.

The servant was anxious to get rid of the few peasants who had got into the house. What sort of conduct was that, he asked them, to a man who was only a tenant, had been invariably good and considerate to the villagers for years; and only the other day had agreed to give up two meadows for the use of the village herd? He reminded them, too, of Mr. Nicholas B's. devotion to the sick in the time of cholera. Every word of this was true and so far effective that the fellows began to scratch their heads and look irresolute. The speaker then pointed at the window, exclaiming. "Look! there's all your crowd going away quietly and you silly chaps had better go after them and pray God to forgive you your evil thoughts."

This appeal was an unlucky inspiration. In crowding clumsily to the window to see whether he was speaking the truth,

the fellows overturned the little writing-table. As it fell over a chink of loose coin was heard. "There's money in that thing," cried the blacksmith. In a moment the top of the delicate piece of furniture was smashed and there lay exposed in a drawer eight half-imperials. Gold coin was a rare sight in Russia even at that time; it put the peasants beside themselves. "There must be more of that in the house and we shall have it," yelled the ex-soldier blacksmith. "This is war time." The others were already shouting out of the window urging the crowd to come back and help. The priest, abandoned suddenly at the gate, flung his arms up and hurried away so as not to see what was going to happen.

In the search for money that bucolic mob smashed everything in the house, ripping with knives, splitting with hatchets, so that, as the servant said, there were no two pieces of wood holding together left in the whole house. They broke some very fine mirrors, all the windows and every piece of glass and china. They threw the books and papers out on the lawn and set fire to the heap for the mere fun of the thing apparently. Absolutely the only one solitary thing which they left whole was a small ivory crucifix, which remained hanging on the wall in the wrecked bedroom above a wild heap of rags, broken mahogany and splintered boards which had been Mr. Nicholas B.'s bedstead. Detecting the servant in the act of stealing away with a japanned tin box, they tore it from him, and because he resisted they threw him out of the dining-room window. The house was on one floor but raised well above the ground, and the fall was so serious that the man remained lying stunned till the cook and a stable-boy ventured forth at dusk from their hiding-places and picked him up. By that time the mob had departed carrying off the tin box, which they supposed to be full of paper money. Some distance from the house in the middle of a field they broke it open. They found inside documents engrossed on parchment and the two crosses of the Legion of Honour and For Valour. At the sight of these objects which, the blacksmith explained, were marks of honour given only by the Tsar, they became extremely frightened at what they had done. They threw the whole lot away into a ditch and dispersed hastily.

On learning of this particular loss Mr. Nicholas B. broke down completely. The mere sacking of his house did not seem to affect him much. While he was still in bed from the shock the two crosses were found and returned to him. It helped somewhat his slow convalescence, but the tin box and the parchments, though searched for in all the ditches

around, never turned up again. He could not get over the loss of his Legion of Honour Patent, whose preamble, setting forth his services, he knew by heart to the very letter, and after this blow voluteered sometimes to recite, tears standing in his eyes the while. Its terms haunted him apparently during the last two years of his life to such an extent that he used to repeat them to himself. This is confirmed by the remark made more than once by his old servant to the more intimate friends. "What makes my heart heavy is to hear our master in his room at night walking up and down and praying aloud in the French language."

It must have been somewhat over a year afterwards that I saw Mr. Nicholas B., or, more correctly, that he saw me, for the last time. It was, as I have already said, at the time when my mother had a three months' leave from exile, which she was spending in the house of her brother, and friends and relations were coming from far and near to do her honour. It is inconceivable that Mr. Nicholas B. should not have been of the number. The little child a few months old he had taken up in his arms on the day of his home-coming after years of war and exile was confessing her faith in national salvation by suffering exile in her turn. I do not know whether he was present on the very day of our departure. I have already admitted that for me he is more especially the man who in his youth had eaten roast dog in the depths of a gloomy forest of snow-charged pines. My memory cannot place him in any remembered scene. A hooked nose, some sleek white hair, an unrelated evanescent impression of a meagre, tall, bowed figure militarily buttoned up to the throat is all that now exists on earth of Mr. Nicholas B.; only this vague shadow pursued by the memory of his grand-nephew, the last surviving human being I suppose of all those he had seen in the course of his taciturn life.

But I remember well the day of our departure back to exile. The elongated, *bizarre*, shabby travelling-carriage with four post-horses, standing before the long front of the house with its eight columns, four on each side of the broad flight of stairs. On the steps, groups of servants, a few relations, one or two friends from the nearest neighbourhood, a perfect silence, on all the faces an air of sober concentration; my grandmother all in black gazing stoically, my uncle giving his arm to my mother down to the carriage in which I had been placed already; at the top of the flight my little cousin in a short skirt of a tartan pattern with a deal of red in it, and like a small princess attended by the women of her own household: the head *gouvernante*, our

dear, corpulent Francesca (who had been for thirty years in the service of the B. family), the former nurse, now outdoor attendant, a handsome peasant face wearing a compassionate expression, and the good, ugly Mlle. Durand, the governess, with her black eyebrows meeting over a short thick nose and a complexion like pale brown paper. In all these eyes turned towards the carriage, it is her good-natured eyes only that were dropping tears, and it was her sobbing voice alone that broke the silence with an appeal to me: "*N'oublie pas ton français, mon chéri.*" In three months, simply by playing with us, she had taught me not only to speak French but to read it as well. She was indeed an excellent playmate. In the distance, half-way down to the great gates, a light, open trap, harnessed with three horses in Russian fashion, stood drawn up on one side with the police-captain of the district sitting in it, the vizor of his flat cap with a red band pulled down over his eyes.

It seems strange that he should have been there to watch our going so carefully. Without wishing to treat with levity the just timidities of Imperialists all the world over, I may allow myself the reflection that a woman, practically condemned by the doctors, and a small boy not quite six years old could not be regarded as seriously dangerous even for the largest of conceivable empires saddled with the most sacred of responsibilities. And this good man I believe did not think so either.

I learned afterwards why he was present on that day. I don't remember any outward signs, but it seems that, about a month before, my mother became so unwell that there was a doubt whether she could be made fit to travel in the time. In this uncertainty the Governor-General in Kiev was petitioned to grant her a fortnight's extension of stay in her brother's house. No answer whatever was returned to this prayer, but one day at dusk the police-captain of the district drove up to the house and told my uncle's valet, who ran out to meet him, that he wanted to speak with the master in private, at once. Very much impressed (he thought it was going to be an arrest) the servant, "more dead than alive with fright," as he related afterwards, smuggled him through the big drawing-room, which was dark (that room was not lighted every evening), on tiptoe, so as not to attract the attention of the ladies in the house, and led him by way of the orangery to my uncle's private apartments.

The policeman, without any preliminaries, thrust a paper into my uncle's hands.

"There. Pray read this. I have no business to show this

paper to you. It is wrong of me. But I can't either eat or sleep with such a job hanging over me."

That police-captain, a native of Great Russia, had been for many years serving in the district.

My uncle unfolded and read the document. It was a service order issued from the Governor-General's secretariat, dealing with the matter of the petition and directing the police-captain to disregard all remonstrances and explanations in regard to that illness either from medical men or others, "and if she has not left her brother's house"—it went on to say—"on the morning of the day specified on her permit, you are to despatch her at once under escort, direct" (underlined) "to the prison-hospital in Kiev, where she will be treated as her case demands."

"For God's sake, Mr. B., see that your sister goes away punctually on the day. Don't give me this work to do with a woman—and with one of your family too. I simply cannot bear to think of it."

He was absolutely wringing his hands. My uncle looked at him in silence.

"Thank you for this warning. I assure you that even if she were dying she would be carried out to the carriage."

"Yes—indeed—and what difference would it make—travel to Kiev or back to her husband. For she would have to go—death or no death. And mind, Mr. B., I will be here on the day, not that I doubt your promise but because I must. I have got to. Duty. All the same my trade is not fit for a dog since some of you Poles will persist in rebelling, and all of you have got to suffer for it."

This is the reason why he was there in an open three-horse trap pulled up between the house and the great gates. I regret not being able to give up his name to the scorn of all believers in the rights of conquest for a reprehensibly sensitive guardian of Imperial greatness. On the other hand, I am in a position to state the name of the Governor-General who signed the order with the marginal note "to be carried out to the letter" in his own handwriting. The gentleman's name was Bezak. A high dignitary, an energetic official, the idol for a time of the Russian Patriotic Press.

Each generation has its memories.

(To be continued)

Iván—"Isvoschick"

By J. Saturin

It was twelve o'clock at night and a bitter frost in St. Petersburg. The air was like a liquid sheet of ice. The biting wind swept round the corners and rushed moaning across the huge square. The cathedral rose up black and silent like a vast pile of frosted iron silhouetted against the dark blue, steely sky, and in the middle of the square confronting it stood the statue of Nicholas I., a glittering white figure, seated upon a glittering white horse, the snowy mantle of both horse and rider reflecting the frozen radiance of the large electric lights surrounding them. The lamps cast a brilliant patch of icy light for a little distance on each side of the statue and shone upon the muffled figure of the sentry pacing around its base with his rifle over his shoulder and his enormous fur collar turned up so as completely to conceal his head. The brittle crust of ice with which the earth was covered gleamed brightly blue and scintillating where the light fell upon it, and, as a solitary sledge sped hastily over the open square, the horse's hoofs struck upon the ice with a sharp melodious echo, as if it were trotting upon some ringing metal.

Iván, the little *isvoschick*, had sought shelter from the wind with his sledge in a narrow by-street leading out of the square. He had pulled his fur cap as far down over his ears as possible, and hidden his frozen little hands in his sleeves. The sledge stood motionless, and the *isvoschick's* head hung forward upon his breast. He was fast asleep.

"Hey, *isvoschick!* Wake up, devil!" suddenly shouted the hoarse voice of a *gorodovoy*. Iván sprang, dazed, out of his sleep, and realised that the policeman with the astrakhan cap, muffled up to the eyes in his peaked hood of rough brown cloth, was stooping down to take the number of the little sledge.

"Two roubles for this," said the *gorodovoy*. "Move out of it, son of a pig!"

Iván, still bewildered, gathered up the reins with his stiff

benumbed fingers and moved slowly off in the direction of the square. As he pulled his big fur cap up from over his ears, he revealed thick fair hair cut low round the neck after the fashion of Russian peasants. It was a tiny, pitiful little figure seated behind the huge bony horse. There are so many such little figures as his among the *isvoschicks* in St. Petersburg, with childish faces under the high, round *isvoschick* hat in the summer, and the gigantic fur cap in the winter.

Iván yawned, settled his cap, shivered, and quickened his pace as he saw a gentleman in a thick fur coat crossing the street at the end of the square.

"You don't want an *isvoschick?*" inquired Iván insinuatingly, as he reached the pedestrian's side.

Petr Petrovitch got into the sledge, giving an address, and pulled the fur rug over his knees.

"A cold night," he remarked. "Will the frost last, *isvoschick?*"

"If God wills it, Barin," said Iván, unconsciously giving the invariable answer returned by every *isvoschick* to the invariable question.

"He's a greedy dog, the frost," remarked Petr Petrovitch, "he eats everything he finds."

"Aye, Barin," returned Iván, "he bites the heart as well as the nose."

"Yours is a cold trade in the winter, *isvoschick*. You don't get too warm sitting on your box all night?"

"A cold trade, Barin. Every rag upon you freezes till your shirt is colder than the snow. It's worse than sitting naked. You can't feel scalding tea run down till your inside gets thawed. You can't feel your hands and you can't feel your feet, and you can't feel what you're sitting on, and your eyelids sting like nettles."

"And how's business, *isvoschick?*"

"Bad, Barin, bad! Three roubles fine to the *gorodovoy* last month. Two just now. Two roubles, he said."

"Oh-ho! What's that for?"

"Maybe God knows, Barin. I've stood in the same place for a week past, and the *gorodovoy* said nothing."

"You were asleep?"

"Asleep, Barin."

"You might have got frozen to death in this frost. Where do you sleep in the day-time?"

"In the stable, Barin, near the horse. Two roubles gone again. Maybe God knows what for."

"Perhaps," suggested Petr Petrovitch, "you had been drinking a little glass of *vodka* and had stopped in the wrong place?"

"I? *Vodka*, Barin? No, not I. No *vodka* for me. I'm sixteen years old, and I've never tasted *vodka*. It's bad, Barin. It makes a man drunk; it makes him like a dog. You can say to him, come here, and he'll come, or go there, and he'll go. You can hit him and he'll fall flat. No drink for me."

Iván turned right round on the box in his excitement and looked at his fare, and Petr Petrovitch, noting the wide blue eyes in the pale, childish face felt a thrill of pity.

"And do you think, little pigeon, that you will be able to stand firm till you are a man?" he asked.

"With God's help, Barin, I'll stand firm. At home in the village, when I lived in the family, the brother was always drinking. It wasn't a life, Barin, it was a thorn-brush! Brother swearing, wife crying, children screaming, old people fretting. So I got up and I said to the old ones, 'Don't cry little mother; don't grieve, little father. I'll go to St. Peters and work and get rich, and you sha'n't sorrow in your old age.' I'm not rich yet," said Iván, with a little laugh, "but I've tasted no *vodka*. At night when I go to the shelter, the little brothers say to me, 'Curse your tea, little pigeon! Drink a glass of *vodka*, that will bring the life back into you.' But I say, 'no, no. Tea for me. None of your hell-fire for me, I say.'"

Iván made this speech in that peculiarly sweet sing-song voice common to the St. Petersburg *isvoschick*. A "fare" always enters into conversation with his driver. The *isvoschick*, in his melodious, unchanging drone, can give as much accurate information of the topics of the town as the columns of a newspaper. He is exceedingly loquacious; an encyclopædia of the quaint sayings and proverbs of the people. He has a large fund of quiet humour and the shrewdest observation. He is kicked and fined by the *gorodovoy*, beaten and exploited by his master; he snatches his sleep partly in the stable with the horses, and partly on his box while waiting for a fare; he is perpetually in a state of semi-starvation; his earnings amount to some six shillings a month when fines are paid—but through it all he never loses his sunny geniality, his ready appreciation of a jest, his faculty of telling repartee. He is a sagacious, good-humoured, helpless, down-trodden being with no rights, no refuge, no protection.

"You are quite alone here in St. Petersburg?" inquired Petr Petrovitch.

"Alone, Barin, alone. I've been alone and I've been cold ever since I left the village."

There was silence for a time. The tall, bony horse trotted wearily along the quay beside the frozen Neva. The Winter Palace loomed dark and gloomy upon the right hand, depressing with its colour as of congealed blood powdered now with snow, and through the distance, in the middle of the frozen river, gleamed the lantern in the gateway of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. The deep voice of its cathedral bell at that moment tolled out across the snow with the solemn chime: "Praise God and thank Him! Praise God and thank Him!"

"Barin," said Iván suddenly, "what makes the people drink so much? Our little brothers, the peasants, for instance—what makes them drink so much?"

"Who can tell, my boy?" answered Petr Petrovitch. "They have a song, you know:

> "Drink, drink, drink,
> And the anguish will pass!"

"The anguish will pass," repeated Iván musingly. "What does it mean, Barin, the anguish will pass?"

"Well, I suppose it means that when a man is cold or hungry or miserable the drink makes him sleepy and stupid so that he doesn't feel the pain and forgets his unhappiness. Anguish means some great unhappiness and the drink makes a man forget it for a time."

"He wouldn't feel the cold, Barin?"

"*Vodka* would warm him at first, and afterwards, as I say, it makes him so stupid that he doesn't feel anything."

"Is it true, Barin?"

"I can't speak from my own experience," said Petr Petrovitch with a smile. "But most people who drink describe the sensation in the same manner, I think. Drink is a very harmful and shameful thing, and it makes a man, as you say, like a dog. But still, one mustn't judge too harshly. Sometimes a man has more sorrow than he can bear, and no help and no comfort, no one to care. Then it sometimes happens that he turns to drink for consolation and a little peace. I think it is often like that with your little brothers, the peasants. That's my door, my boy. Good-night 'little pigeon.' God help you. God keep you."

Iván took his fare and began to dig in his capacious top-boots to find his purse. He had gained sufficient experience in his few months of town life to know that no *isvoschick* who would prosper sticks his purse into the breast of his coat. Twice his earnings

had been stolen from him as he sat upon his box temporarily overcome in the perpetual struggle with that harassing enemy, sleep. There is a brotherhood of thieves in St. Petersburg who gain a fat livelihood by pilfering the earnings of the unwary *isvoschick*.

"God help you. God keep you," murmured Iván, repeating the last words of Petr Petrovitch, and suddenly for some reason the tears sprang into his eyes.

The big horse moved slowly down the street, and Iván pondered.

"That's a good Barin," he thought. "He has a golden heart. 'God bless you,' he said. 'God keep you. Yours is a cold trade in the winter, *isvoschick*,' he said. He knows."

The tears rose to his eyes again, and he felt inclined to cry. But the sensation was so strange to him that he hardly knew the meaning of it.

The night grew darker, and the frost more bitter. The horse, according to custom, stopped near the kerbstone and stood there; the *isvoschick* dropped the reins and buried his hands in his sleeves. He was still musing.

"'Drink, drink, drink, and the anguish will pass.' The Barin said it means that when a man is cold and hungry and miserable, the drink makes him forget it. It makes him warm. I said, 'I've been alone and I've been cold ever since I left the village.' 'Alone,' I said, 'and cold.' That's true, it's true enough," thought the little *isvoschick*, and a big tear dropped upon the rug covering his knees.

"The anguish will pass," the words rang persistently in his head. "Anguish means some great unhappiness. Oh, it's being alone and the cold that's so bad; the cold and being alone. That's what it is."

Another tear rolled down his cheek. The numberless new and hard experiences crowded into the short time which had elapsed since his proud boast to the old people, the blows, the curses, the hunger, the cold, the terrible weariness, and above all, the loneliness, the pitiless indifference of the great city rose up before him and the tears began to follow one another. He knew now that he would never send a rouble back to the village, that he would never possess the money to take him home again, perhaps he would never be able to spare enough *kopecks* to pay the letter-writer and the stamp and to send the little father and mother a letter. He would be alone, always alone, and there was no one who would help him, no one to care. The words of Petr Petrovitch recurred to him:

"Sometimes a man has more sorrow than he can bear, and there is no help, no comfort, no one to care."

"He knows, he knows, he knows," thought little Iván. A wild impulse seized him to go back and find the Barin again; but he knew that such a thing was impossible.

And a drunkard reeling past, shouting the refrain of a rollicking chorus, received a shock which nearly served to sober him. The *isvoschick* on the sledge at the corner of the street, leaning forward with his arms upon his knees, was sobbing bitterly. The sight was so extraordinary that it jarred even upon drunken senses. The man paused for a moment, stopped singing and stood shaking and wavering, gazing in tipsy astonishment at the incredible phenomena. But the *isvoschick* did not raise his head, and the hopeless sobbing continued. The drunkard moved a few steps forward, paused, shook his head, and finally reeled off silently homewards.

In the small hours of the morning, when Iván entered the *traktir*, the fat proprietor said to him as usual from behind the counter: "Tea for you, eh, *isvoschick?*"

But Iván answered him:

"No, little uncle, *vodka*. I'm cold."

The time wore on and the bony horse dozing in the court-yard with the little sledge behind him woke up at intervals to wonder why his little master did not come to drive him out into the streets again.

But Iván was in the *traktir*, fast asleep, with his head upon the table. His cap lay beside him, and his mass of shaggy fair hair was shining in the gaslight. It would have been very difficult indeed to awaken him from that death-like sleep of exhaustion and a strong dose of *vodka* combined. And if they had awakened him he would never have been able to drive the tall horse out between the court-yard gates.

The Virgin of the Seven Daggers

A Moorish Ghost Story of the Seventeenth Century

By Vernon Lee

V

For a long while the Count of Miramor stood dazed and dazzled, unable to see anything, save the whirling flight of the owl, which circled in what seemed a field of waving, burning red. He closed his eyes; but through the singed lids he still saw that waving red atmosphere, and the black creature whirling about him.

Then, gradually, he began to perceive and comprehend: lines and curves arose shadowy before him, and the faint plash of waters cooled his ringing ears.

He found that he was standing in a lofty colonnade, with a deep tank at his feet, surrounded by high hedges of flowering myrtles, whose jade-coloured water held the reflection of Moorish porticos, shining orange in the sunlight, of high walls covered with shimmering blue and green tiles, and of a great red tower, raising its battlements into the cloudless blue. From the tower waved two flags, a white one and one of purple with a gold pomegranate. As he stood there, a sudden breath of air shuddered through the myrtles, wafting their fragrance towards him; the fountain began to bubble; and the reflection of the porticos and hedges and tower to vacillate in the jade-green water, furling and unfurling like the pieces of a fan; and, above, the two banners unfolded themselves slowly, and little by little began to stream in the wind.

Don Juan advanced. At the further end of the tank a peacock was standing by the myrtle hedge, immovable as if made of precious enamels; but as Don Juan went by, the short blue-green feathers of his neck began to ruffle; he moved his tail, and swelling himself out, he slowly unfolded it in a dazzling wheel. As he did so, some blackbirds and thrushes in gilt cages hanging within an archway, began to twitter and to sing.

From the court of the tank, Don Juan entered another and smaller court, passing through a narrow archway. On its marble steps lay three warriors, clad in long embroidered surcoats of silk, beneath which gleamed their armour, and wearing on their heads strange helmets of steel mail, which hung loose on to their gorgets and were surmounted by gilded caps; beneath them—for they had seemingly leant on them in their slumbers—lay round targes or shields, and battle-axes of Damascus work. As he passed, they began to stir and breathe heavily. He strode quickly by, and at the entrance of the smaller court, from which issued a delicious scent of full-blown Persian roses, another sentinel was leaning against a column, his hands clasped round his lance, his head bent on his breast. As Don Juan passed he slowly raised his head, and opened one eye, then the other. Don Juan rushed past, a cold sweat on his brow.

Low beams of sunlight lay upon the little inner court, in whose midst, surrounded by rose hedges, stood a great basin of alabaster, borne on four thick-set pillars; a skin, as of ice, filmed over the basin; but, as if some one should have thrown a stone on to a frozen surface, the water began to move and to trickle slowly into the other basin below.

"The waters are flowing, the nightingales singing," murmured a figure which lay by the fountain, grasping, like one just awakened, a lute that lay by his side. From the little court Don Juan entered a series of arched and domed chambers, whose roofs were hung as with icicles of gold and silver, or incrusted with mother of pearl constellations that twinkled in the darkness, while the walls shone with patterns that seemed carved of ivory and pearl and beryl and amethyst where the sunbeam grazed them, or imitated some strange sea caves, filled with flitting colours, where the shadow rose fuller and higher. In these chambers Don Juan found a number of sleepers, soldiers and slaves, black and white, all of whom sprang to their feet and rubbed their eyes and made obeisance as he went. Then he entered a long passage, lined on either side by a row of sleeping eunuchs, dressed in robes of honour, each leaning, sword in hand, against the wall, and of slave-girls with stuff of striped silver about their loins, and sequins at the end of their long hair, and drums and timbrels in their hands. At regular intervals stood great golden cressets, in which burned sweet-smelling wood, casting a reddish light over the sleeping faces. But as Don Juan approached, the slaves inclined their bodies to the ground, touching it with their turbans, and the girls thumped on their drums and jingled the brass bells of their timbrels. Thus he

passed on from chamber to chamber till he came to a great door formed of stars of cedar and ivory studded with gold nails, and bolted by a huge gold bolt, on which ran mystic inscriptions. Don Juan stopped. But, as he did so, the bolt slowly moved in its socket, retreating gradually, and the immense portals swung slowly back, each into its carved hinge column.

Behind them was disclosed a vast circular hall, so vast that you could not possibly see where it ended, and filled with a profusion of lights, wax candles held by rows and rows of white maidens, and torches held by rows and rows of white-robed eunuchs, and cressets burning upon lofty stands, and lamps dangling from the distant vault, through which here and there entered, blending strangely with the rest, great beams of white daylight. Don Juan stopped short, blinded by this magnificence, and as he did so, the fountain in the midst of the hall arose and shivered its cypress-like crest against the topmost vault, and innumerable voices of exquisite sweetness burst forth in strange wistful chants, and instruments of all kinds, both such as are blown and such as are twanged and rubbed with a bow, and such as are shaken and thumped, united with the voices and filled the hall with sound, as it was already filled with light.

Don Juan grasped his sword and advanced. At the extremity of the hall a flight of alabaster steps led up to a daïs or raised recess, overhung by an archway whose stalactites shone like beaten gold, and whose tiled walls glistened like precious stones. And on the daïs, on a throne of sandal-wood and ivory, incrusted with gems and carpeted with the product of the Chinese loom, sat the Moorish Infanta, fast asleep.

To the right and the left, but on a step beneath the princess, stood her two most intimate attendants, the Chief Duenna and the Chief Eunuch, to whom the prudent King Yahya had intrusted his only child during her sleep of four hundred years. The Chief Duenna was habited in a suit of sad-coloured violet weeds, with many modest swathings of white muslin round her yellow and wrinkled countenance. The Chief Eunuch was a portly negro, of a fine purple hue, with cheeks like an allegorical wind, and a complexion as shiny as a well-worn door-knocker : he was enveloped from top to toe in marigold-coloured robes, and on his head he wore a towering turban of embroidered cashmere. Both these great personages held, beside their especial insignia of office, namely, a Mecca rosary in the hand of the Duenna, and a silver wand in the hand of the Eunuch, great fans of white peacocks' tails, wherewith to chase away from their royal charge any ill-advised fly. But at this moment

all the flies in the place were fast asleep, and the Duenna and the Eunuch also. And between them, canopied by a parasol of white silk, on which were embroidered, in figures which moved like those in dreams, the histories of Jusuf and Zuleika, of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, and of many other famous lovers, sat the Infanta, erect, but veiled in gold-starred gauzes, as an unfinished statue is veiled in the roughness of the marble.

Don Juan walked quickly between the rows of prostrate slaves, and the singing dancing girls, and those holding tapers and torches; and stopped only at the very foot of the throne steps.

"Awake!" he cried, "my princess, my bride, awake!"

A faint stir arose in the veils of the muffled form; and Don Juan felt his temples throb, and, at the same time, a deathly coldness steal over him.

"Awake!" he repeated boldly. But instead of the Infanta, it was the venerable Duenna who raised her withered countenance and looked round with a startled jerk, awakened not so much by the voices and instruments as by the tread of a masculine boot. The Chief Eunuch also awoke suddenly; but with the grace of one grown old in the antechamber of kings, he quickly suppressed a yawn, and laying his hand on his embroidered vest, he made a profound obeisance.

"Verily," he remarked, "Allah (who alone possesses the secrets of the universe) is remarkably great, since he not only . . ."

"Awake, awake, princess!" interrupted Don Juan ardently, his foot on the lowest step of the throne.

But the Chief Eunuch waved him back with his wand, continuing his speech—"since he not only gave unto his servant King Yahya (may his shadow never be less!) power and riches far exceeding that of any of the kings of the earth or even of Solomon the son of David. . . ."

"Cease, fellow!" cried Don Juan, and pushing aside the wand and the negro's dimpled chocolate hand, he rushed up the steps and flung himself at the foot of the veiled Infanta, his rapier clanging strangely as he did so.

"Unveil, my beloved, more beautiful than Oriana, for whom Amadis wept in the Black Mountain, than Gradasilia whom Felixmarte sought on the winged dragon, than Helen of Sparta who fired the towers of Troy, than Calixto whom Jove was obliged to change into a female bear, than Venus herself on whom Paris bestowed the fatal apple. Unveil and arise, like the rosy Aurora from old Tithonus' couch, and welcome the knight who has confronted every peril for thee, Juan Gusman

del Pulgar, Count of Miramor, who is ready, for thee, to confront every other peril of the world or of hell; and to fix upon thee alone his affections, more roving hitherto than those of Prince Galaor or of the many-shaped god Proteus!"

A shiver ran through the veiled princess. The Chief Eunuch gave a significant nod, and waved his white wand thrice. Immediately a concert of voices and instruments, as numerous as those of the forces of the air when mustered before King Solomon, filled the vast hall. The dancing girls raised their tambourines over their heads, and poised themselves on tip-toe. A wave of fragrant essences passed through the air filled with the spray of innumerable fountains. And the Duenna, slowly advancing to the side of the throne, took in her withered fingers the topmost fold of shimmering gauze, and slowly gathering it backwards, displayed the Infanta unveiled before Don Juan's gaze.

The breast of the princess heaved deeply; her lips opened with a little sigh, and she languidly raised her long-fringed lids; then cast down her eyes on the ground, and resumed the rigidity of a statue. She was most marvellously fair. She sat on the cushions of the throne with modestly crossed legs; her hands, with nails tinged violet with henna, demurely folded in her lap. Through the thinness of her embroidered muslins shone the magnificence of purple and orange vests, stiff with gold and gems, and all subdued into a wondrous opalescent radiance. From her head there descended on either side of her person a diaphanous veil of shimmering colours, powdered over with minute glittering spangles. Her breast was covered with rows and rows of the largest pearls, a perfect network reaching from her slender throat to her waist, among which flashed diamonds embroidered in her vest. Her face was oval, with the silver pallor of the young moon; her mouth, most subtly carmined, looked like a pomegranate flower among tuberoses, for her cheeks were painted white, and the orbits of her great long-fringed eyes were stained violet. In the middle of each cheek, however, was a delicate spot of pink, in which an exquisite art had painted a small pattern of pyramid shape, so naturally that you might have thought that a real piece of embroidered stuff was decorating the maiden's countenance. On her head she wore a high tiara of jewels, the ransom of many kings, which sparkled and blazed like a lit-up altar. The eyes of the princess were decorously fixed on the ground.

Don Juan stood silent in ravishment.

"Princess!" he at length began.

But the Chief Eunuch laid his wand gently on his shoulder.

"My Lord," he whispered, "it is not etiquette that your Magnificence should address her Highness in any direct fashion; let alone the fact that her Highness does not understand the Castilian tongue, nor your Magnificence the Arabic. But through the mediumship of this most respectable lady, her Discretion the Principal Duenna, and my unworthy self, a conversation can be carried on equally delicious and instructive to both parties."

"A plague upon the old brute!" thought Don Juan; but he reflected upon what had never struck him before, that they had indeed been conversing, or attempting to converse, in Spanish, and that the Castilian spoken by the Chief Eunuch was, although correct, quite obsolete, being that of the sainted King Ferdinand. There was a whispered consultation between the two great dignitaries; and the Duenna approached her lips to the Infanta's ear. The princess moved her pomegranate lips in a faint smile, but without raising her eyelids, and murmured something which the ancient lady whispered to the Chief Eunuch, who bowed thrice in answer. Then turning to Don Juan with most mellifluous tones, "Her Highness the Princess," he said, bowing thrice as he mentioned her name, "is, like all princesses, but to an even more remarkable extent, endowed with the most exquisite modesty. She is curious therefore, despite the superiority of her charms—so conspicuous even to those born blind—to know whether your Magnificence does not consider her the most beautiful thing you have ever beheld."

Don Juan laid his hand upon his heart with an affirmative gesture more eloquent than any words.

Again an almost invisible smile hovered about the pomegranate mouth, and there was a murmur and a whispering consultation.

"Her Highness," pursued the Chief Eunuch blandly, "has been informed by the judicious instructors of her tender youth, that cavaliers are frequently fickle, and that your Lordship in particular has assured many ladies in succession that each was the most beautiful creature you had ever beheld. Without admitting for an instant the possibility of a parallel, she begs your Magnificence to satisfy her curiosity on the point. Does your Lordship consider her as infinitely more beautiful than the Lady Catalina?"

Now Catalina was one of the famous seven for whom Don Juan had committed a deadly crime.

He was taken aback by the exactness of the Infanta's information; he was rather sorry they should have told her about Catalina.

"Of course," he answered hastily, "pray do not mention such a name in her Highness's presence."

The princess bowed imperceptibly.

"Her Highness," pursued the Chief Eunuch, "still actuated by the curiosity due to her high birth and tender youth, is desirous of knowing whether your Lordship considers her far more beautiful than the Lady Violante?"

Don Juan made an impatient gesture. "Slave! never speak of Violante in my princess's presence!" he exclaimed, fixing his eyes upon the tuberose cheeks and the pomegranate mouth which bloomed among that shimmer of precious stones.

"Good. And may the same be said to apply to the ladies Dolores and Elvira?"

"Dolores and Elvira and Fatma and Azahar," answered Don Juan, greatly provoked at the Chief Eunuch's want of tact, "and all the rest of womankind."

"And shall we add also, than Sister Seraphita of the Convent of Santa Isabel la Real?"

"Yes," cried Don Juan, "than Sister Seraphita, for whom I committed the greatest sin which can be committed by living man."

As he said these words, Don Juan was about to fling his arms about the princess and cut short this rather too elaborate courtship.

But again he was waved back by the white wand.

"One question more, only one, my dear Lord," whispered the Chief Eunuch; "I am most concerned at your impatience, but the laws of etiquette and the caprices of young princesses *must* go before everything, as you will readily admit. Stand back, I pray you."

Don Juan felt sorely inclined to thrust his sword through the yellow bolster of the great personage's vest; but he choked his rage, and stood quietly on the throne steps, one hand on his heart, the other on his sword-hilt, the boldest cavalier in all the kingdom of Spain.

"Speak, speak!" he begged.

The princess, without moving a muscle of her exquisite face, or unclosing her flower-like mouth, murmured some words to the Duenna, who whispered them mysteriously to the Chief Eunuch.

At this moment also the Infanta raised her heavy eyelids, stained violet with henna, and fixed upon the cavalier a glance long, dark and deep, like that of the wild antelope.

"Her Highness," resumed the Chief Eunuch, with a sweet

smile, "is extremely gratified with your Lordship's answers, although of course they could not possibly have been at all different. But there remains yet another lady . . ."

Don Juan shook his head impatiently.

"Another lady concerning whom the Infanta desires some information. Does your Lordship consider her more beautiful also than the Virgin of the Seven Daggers ?"

The place seemed to swim about Don Juan. Before his eyes rose the throne, all vacillating in its splendour, and on the throne the Moorish Infanta with the triangular patterns painted on her tuberose cheeks, and the long look in her henna'd eyes ; and the image of her was blurred, and imperceptibly it seemed to turn into the effigy, black and white in her stiff puce frock and seed-pearl stomacher, of the Virgin of the Seven Daggers staring blankly into space.

"My Lord," remarked the Chief Eunuch, "methinks that love has made you somewhat inattentive, a great blemish in a cavalier, when answering the questions of a lovely princess. I therefore venture to repeat : do you consider her more beautiful than the Virgin of the Seven Daggers ?"

"Do you consider her more beautiful than the Virgin of the Seven Daggers ?" repeated the Duenna, glaring at Don Juan.

"Do you consider me more beautiful than the Virgin of the Seven Daggers ?" asked the princess, speaking suddenly in Spanish, or at least in language perfectly intelligible to Don Juan. And, as she spoke the words, all the slave-girls and eunuchs and singers and players, the whole vast hall full, seemed to echo the same question.

The Count of Miramor stood silent for an instant ; then raising his hand and looking round him with quiet decision, he answered in a loud voice :

"No !"

"In that case," said the Chief Eunuch with the politeness of a man desirous of cutting short an embarrassing silence, "in that case I am very sorry it should be my painful duty to intimate to your Lordship that you must undergo the punishment usually allotted to cavaliers who are disobliging to young and tender princesses."

So saying, he clapped his black hands, and, as if by magic, there arose at the foot of the steps, a gigantic Berber of the Rif, his brawny sunburnt limbs left bare by a scanty striped shirt, fastened round his waist by a wisp of rope, his head shaven blue except in the middle, where, encircled by a coronet of

worsted rag, there flamed a top-knot of dreadful orange hair.

"Decapitate that gentleman," ordered the Chief Eunuch in his most obliging tones. Don Juan felt himself collared, dragged down the steps, and forced into a kneeling posture on the lowest landing, all in the twinkling of an eye.

From beneath the bronzed left arm of the ruffian he could see the milk-white of the alabaster steps, the gleam of an immense scimitar, the mingled blue and yellow of the cressets and tapers, the daylight filtering through the constellations in the dark cedar vault, the glitter of the Infanta's diamonds, and, of a sudden, the twinkle of the Chief Eunuch's eye.

Then all was black, and Don Juan felt himself, that is to say, his own head, rebound three times like a ball upon the alabaster steps.

VI

It had evidently all been a dream—perhaps a delusion induced by the vile fumigations of that filthy ruffian of a renegade Jew. The infidel dogs had certain abominable drugs which gave them visions of paradise and hell when smoked or chewed—nasty brutes that they were—and this was some of their devilry. But he should pay for it, the cursed old grey-beard, the Holy Office should keep him warm, or a Miramor was not a Miramor. For Don Juan forgot, or disbelieved, not only that he himself had been beheaded by a Rif Berber the evening before, but that he had previously run poor Baruch through the body and hurled him down the rocks near the Tower of the Cypresses.

This confusion of mind was excusable on the part of the cavalier. For, on opening his eyes, he had found himself lying in a most unlikely resting-place, considering the time and season, namely, a heap of old bricks and rubbish, half-hidden in withered reeds and sprouting weeds, on a ledge of the precipitous hillside that descends into the River Darro. Above him rose the dizzy red-brick straightness of the tallest tower of the Alhambra, pierced at its very top by an arched and pillared window, and scantily overgrown with the roots of a dead ivy-tree. Below, at the bottom of the precipice, dashed the little Darro, brown and swollen with melted snows, between its rows of leafless poplars; beyond it, the roofs and balconies and orange-trees of the older part of Grenada; and above that, with the morning sunshine and mists fighting among its hovels, its square belfries and great masses of prickly pear and aloe, the Albaycin, whose highest convent tower stood out already against a sky of winter blue.

The Albaycin—that was the quarter of that villain Baruch, who dared to play practical jokes on grandees of Spain of the very first class.

This thought caused Don Juan to spring up, and, grasping his sword, to scramble through the sprouting elder-bushes and the heaps of broken masonry, down to the bridge over the river.

It was a beautiful winter morning, sunny, blue and crisp through the white mists; and Don Juan sped along as with wings to his feet, for having remembered that it was the anniversary of the Liberation, and that he, as descendant of Fernan Perez del Pulgar, would be expected to carry the banner of the city at High Mass in the cathedral, he had determined that his absence from the ceremony should raise no suspicions of his ridiculous adventure. For ridiculous it had been—and the sense of its being ridiculous filled the generous breast of the Count of Miramor with a longing to murder every man, woman or child he encountered as he sped through the streets. "Look at his Excellency the Count of Miramor; look at Don Juan Gusman del Pulgar! He's been made a fool of by old Baruch the renegade Jew!" he imagined everybody to be thinking.

But, on the contrary, no one took the smallest notice of him. The muleteers, driving along their beasts laden with heather and myrtle for the bakehouse ovens, allowed their loads to brush him, as if he had been the merest errand-boy; the stout black housewives, going to market with their brass braziers tucked under their cloaks, never once turned round as he pushed them rudely on the cobbles; nay, the very beggars, armless and legless and shameless, who were alighting from their go-carts and taking up their station at the church doors, did not even extend a hand towards the passing cavalier. Before a popular barber's some citizens were waiting to have their top-knots plaited into tidy tails, discussing the while the olive harvest, the price of spartgrass and the chances of the bull-ring. This, Don Juan expected, would be a fatal spot, for from the barber's shop the news must go about that Don Juan del Pulgar, hatless and covered with mud, was hurrying home with a discomfited countenance, ill-befitting the hero of so many nocturnal adventures. But, although Don Juan had to make his way right in front of the barber's, not one of the clients did so much as turn his head, perhaps out of fear of displeasing so great a cavalier. Suddenly, as Don Juan hurried along, he noticed for the first time, among the cobbles and the dry mud of the street, large drops of blood, growing larger as they went, becoming an almost uninterrupted line, then, in the puddles, a little red stream. Such were by

no means uncommon vestiges in those days of duels and town broils; besides, some butcher or early sportsman, a wild boar on his horse, might have been passing. But somehow or other, this track of blood exerted an odd attraction over Don Juan; and unconsciously to himself, instead of taking the short cut to his palace, he followed it along some of the chief streets of Grenada. The blood-stains, as was natural, led in the direction of the great hospital, founded by Saint John of God, to which it was customary to carry the victims of accidents and street fights. Before the monumental gateway, where Saint John of God knelt in effigy before the Madonna, a large crowd was collected, above whose heads oscillated the black and white banners of a mortuary confraternity, and the flame and smoke of their torches. The street was blocked with carts, and with riders rising in their stirrups to look over the crowd, and even by gaily trapped mules and gilded coaches, in which veiled ladies were anxiously questioning their lackeys and outriders. The throng of idle and curious citizens, of monks and brothers of mercy, reached up the steps and right into the cloistered court of the hospital.

"Who is it?" asked Don Juan with his usual masterful manner, pushing his way into the crowd. The man whom he addressed, a stalwart peasant with a long tail pinned under his hat, turned round vaguely, but did not answer.

"Who is it?" repeated Don Juan louder.

But no one answered, although he accompanied the question with a good push, and even a thrust with his sheathed sword.

"Cursed idiots! Are you all deaf and dumb, that you cannot answer a cavalier?" he cried angrily, and taking a portly priest by the collar, he shook him roughly.

"Jesus Maria Joseph!" exclaimed the priest; but turning round he took no notice of Don Juan, and merely rubbed his collar, muttering "Well, if the demons are to be allowed to take respectable canons by the collar, it *is* time that we should have a good witch-burning."

Don Juan took no heed of his words, but thrust onward, upsetting, as he did so, a young woman who was lifting her child to let it see the show. The crowd parted as the woman fell, and people ran to pick her up, but no one took any notice of Don Juan. Indeed, he himself was struck by the way in which he passed through its midst, encountering no opposition from the phalanx of robust shoulders and hips.

"Who is it?" asked Don Juan again.

He had got into a clearing of the crowd. On the lowest step of the hospital gate stood a little knot of black penitents, their black linen cowls flung back on their shoulders, and of priests and monks muttering together. Some of them were beating back the crowd, others snuffing their torches against the paving-stones, and letting the wax drip off their tapers. In the midst of them, with a standard of the Virgin at its head, was a light wooden bier, set down by its bearers. It was covered with coarse black serge, on which were embroidered in yellow braid a skull and cross-bones, and the monogram I.H.S. Under the bier was a little red pool.

"Who is it?" asked Don Juan one last time; but instead of waiting for an answer, he stepped forward, sword in hand, and rudely pulled aside the rusty black pall.

On the bier was stretched a corpse dressed in black velvet, with lace cuffs and collar, loose boots, buff gloves, and a blood-clotted dark matted head, lying loose half an inch above the mangled throat.

Don Juan Gusman del Pulgar stared fixedly.

It was himself.

The church into which Don Juan had fled was that of the Virgin of the Seven Daggers. It was deserted, as usual, and filled with chill morning light, in which glittered the gilded cornices and altars, and gleamed, like pools of water, the many precious marbles. A sort of mist seemed to hang about it all, and dim the splendour of the high altar.

Don Juan del Pulgar sank down in the midst of the nave; not on his knees, for (O horror!) he felt that he had no longer any knees, nor indeed any back, any arms, or limbs of any kind, and he dared not ask himself whether he was still in possession of a head: his only sensations were such as might be experienced by a slowly trickling pool, or a snow-wreath in process of melting, or a cloud fitting itself on to a flat surface of rock.

He was disembodied. He now understood why no one had noticed him in the crowd, why he had been able to penetrate through its thickness, and why, when he struck people and pulled them by the collar and knocked them down, they had taken no more notice of him than of a blast of wind. He was a ghost. He was dead. This was the after life; and he was infallibly within a few minutes of hell.

"O Virgin, Virgin of the Seven Daggers!" he cried with hopeless bitterness, "is this the way you recompense my faithfulness? I have died unshriven, in the midst of mortal sin, merely

because I would not say you were less beautiful than the Moorish Infanta ; and is this all my reward ? "

But even as he spoke these words an extraordinary miracle took place. The white winter light broke into wondrous iridescences ; the white mist collected into shoals of dim palm-bearing angels ; the cloud of stale incense, still hanging over the high altar, gathered into fleecy balls, which became the heads and backs of well-to-do cherubs ; and Don Juan, reeling and fainting, felt himself rise, higher and higher, as if borne up on clusters of soap-bubbles. The cupola began to rise and expand ; the painted clouds to move and blush a deeper pink ; the painted sky to recede and turn into deep holes of real blue. As he was borne upwards, the allegorical virtues in the lunettes began to move and brandish their attributes ; the colossal stucco angels on the cornices to pelt him with flowers no longer of plaster of Paris ; the place was filled with delicious fragrance of incense, and with sounds of exquisitely played lutes and viols, and of voices, among which he distinctly recognised Syphax, his Majesty's chief soprano. And, as Don Juan floated upwards through the cupola of the church, his heart suddenly filled with a consciousness of extraordinary virtue ; the gold transparency at the top of the dome expanded ; its rays grew redder and more golden, and there burst from it at last a golden moon crescent, on which stood, in her farthingale of puce and her stomacher of seed-pearl, her big black eyes fixed mildly upon him, the Virgin of the Seven Daggers.

" Your story of the late noble Count of Miramor, Don Juan Gusman del Pulgar," wrote Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca, in March 1666, to his friend, the Archpriest Morales, at Grenada, " so veraciously revealed in a vision to the holy prior of Saint Nicholas, is indeed such as must touch the heart of the most stubborn. Were it presented in the shape of a play, adorned with graces of style and with flowers of rhetoric, it would be indeed (with the blessing of heaven) well calculated to spread the glory of our holy church. But alas, my dear friend, the snows of age are as thick on my head as the snows of winter upon your Mulhacen ; and who knows whether I shall ever be able to write again ? "

The forecast of the illustrious dramatic poet proved, indeed, too true ; and hence it is that unworthy modern hands have sought to frame the veracious and moral history of Don Juan and the Virgin of the Seven Daggers.

Tono-Bungay

A Romance of Commerce

By H. G. Wells

BOOK THE SECOND: THE RISE OF TONO-BUNGAY

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

MARION

§ 2 (*continued*)

We became engaged, as I have told; we broke it off and joined again. We went through a succession of such phases. We had no sort of idea what was wrong with us. Presently we were formally engaged. I had a wonderful interview with her father in which he was stupendously grave and *h*-less, wanted to know about my origins and was tolerant (exasperatingly tolerant) because my mother was a servant, and afterwards her mother took to kissing me and I bought a ring. But the speechless aunt, I gathered, didn't approve—having doubts of my religiosity. Whenever we were estranged we could keep apart for days; and to begin with, every such separation was a relief. And then I would want her; a restless longing would come upon me. I would think of the flow of her arms, of the soft gracious bend of her body. I would lie awake or dream of a transfigured Marion of light and fire. It was indeed Dame Nature driving me on to womankind in her stupid, inexorable way; but I thought it was the need of Marion that troubled me. So I always went back to Marion at last and made it up and more or less conceded or ignored whatever thing had parted us, and more and more I urged her to marry me. . . .

In the long run that became a fixed idea. It entangled my will and my pride, I told myself I was not going to be beaten. I hardened to the business. I think, as a matter of fact, my real

passion for Marion had waned enormously, long before we were married, that she had lived it down by sheer irresponsiveness. When I felt sure of my three hundred a year she stipulated for delay, twelve months' delay, "to see how things would turn out." There were times when she seemed simply an antagonist holding out irritatingly against something I had to settle. Moreover, I began to be greatly distracted by the interest and excitement of Tono-Bungay's success, by the change and movement in things, the going to and fro. I would forget her for days together, and then desire her with an irritating intensity. At last, one Saturday afternoon, after a brooding morning I determined almost savagely that these delays must end.

I went off to the little house at Walham Green and made Marion come with me to Putney Common. Marion wasn't at home when I got there and I had to fret for a time and talk to her father, who was just back from his office, he explained, and enjoying himself in his own way in the greenhouse.

"I'm going to ask your daughter to marry me," I said. "I think we've been waiting long enough."

"I don't approve of long engagements either," said her father. "But Marion will have her own way about it anyhow. See this new powdered fertiliser?"

I went in to talk to Mrs. Ramboat. "She'll want time to get her things," said Mrs. Ramboat. . . .

I and Marion sat down together on a little seat under some trees at the top of Putney Hill, and I came to my point abruptly

"Look here, Marion," I said, "are you going to marry me or are you not?"

She smiled at me. "Well," she said, "we're engaged—aren't we?"

"That can't go on for ever. Will you marry me next week?"

She looked me in the face. "We can't," she said.

"You promised to marry me when I had three hundred a year."

She was silent for a space. "Can't we go on for a time as we are? We *could* marry on three hundred a year. But it means a very little house. There's Smithie's brother. They manage on two hundred and fifty, but that's very little. She says they have a semi-detached house almost on the road, and hardly a bit of garden. And the wall to next-door is so thin, they hear everything. When her baby cries—they rap. And people stand against the railings and talk. . . . Can't we wait? You're doing so well."

An extraordinary bitterness possessed me at this invasion of

the stupendous beautiful business of love by sordid necessity. I answered her with immense restraint.

"If," I said, "we could have a double-fronted, detached house—at Ealing, say—with a square patch of lawn in front and a garden behind—and—and a tiled bathroom."

"That would be sixty pounds a year at least."

"Which means five hundred a year. . . . Yes, well, you see I told my uncle I wanted that, and I've got it."

"Got what?"

"Five hundred pounds a year."

"Five hundred pounds!"

I burst into laughter that had more than a taste of bitterness.

"Yes," I said, "really! and *now* what do you think?"

"Yes," she said, a little flushed; "but be sensible! Do you really mean you've got a Rise, all at once, of two hundred a year?"

"To marry on—yes."

She scrutinised me a moment. "You've done this as a surprise!" she said, and laughed at my laughter. She had become radiant, and that made me radiant too.

"Yes," I said, "yes," and laughed no longer bitterly. She clasped her hands and looked me in the eyes.

She was so pleased that I forgot absolutely my disgust of a moment before. I forgot that she had raised her price two hundred pounds a year and that I had bought her at that.

"Come!" I said, standing up; "let's go towards the sunset, dear, and talk about it all. Do you know—this is a most beautiful world, an amazingly beautiful world, and when the sunset falls upon you it makes you into shining gold. No, not gold—into golden glass. . . . Into something better than either glass or gold. . . ."

And for all that evening I wooed her and kept her glad. She made me repeat my assurances over again and still doubted a little.

We furnished that double-fronted house from attic—it ran to an attic—to cellar, and created a garden.

"Do you know Pampas Grass?" said Marion. "I love Pampas Grass . . . if there is room."

"You shall have Pampas Grass," I declared.

And there were moments as we went in imagination about that house together, when my whole being cried out to take her in my arms—now. But I refrained. On that aspect of life I touched very lightly in that talk, very lightly because I had had my lessons.

She promised to marry me within two months' time. Shyly, reluctantly, she named a day, and next afternoon, in heat and

wrath, we " broke it off " again for the last time. We split upon procedure. I refused flatly to have a normal wedding with wedding-cake, white favours, carriages and the rest of it. It dawned upon me suddenly in conversation with her and her mother that this was implied. I blurted out my objection forthwith, and this time it wasn't any ordinary difference of opinion ; it was a " row." I don't remember a quarter of the things we flung out in that dispute. I remember her mother reiterating in tones of gentle remonstrance : " But, George dear, you *must* have a cake—to send round." I think we all reiterated things. I seem to remember a refrain of my own : " A marriage is too sacred a thing, too private a thing, for this display." Her father came in and stood behind me against the wall, and her aunt appeared beside the sideboard and stood with folded arms, looking from speaker to speaker, a sternly gratified prophetess. It didn't occur to me then how painful it was to Marion for these people to witness my rebellion.

" But, George," said her father, " what sort of marriage do you want ? You don't want to go to one of those there registary offices ? "

" That's exactly what I'd like to do. Marriage is too private a thing——"

" I shouldn't feel married," said Mrs. Ramboat.

" Look here, Marion," I said ; " we are going to be married at a registry office. I don't believe in all these—fripperies and superstitions, and I won't submit to them. I've agreed to all sorts of things to please you."

" What's he agreed to ? " said her father—unheeded.

" I can't marry at a registry office," said Marion, sallow-white.

" Very well," I said, " I'll marry nowhere else."

" I can't marry at a registry office."

" Very well," I said, standing up, white and tense, and it amazed me, but I was also exultant ; " then we won't marry at all."

She leant forward over the table, staring blankly at nothing.

" I don't think we'd better," she said in a low tone ; " if it's to be like this."

" It's for you to choose," I said. I stood for a moment watching the cloud of sulky offence that veiled her beauty.

" It's for you to choose," I repeated ; and regardless of the others, walked to the door, slammed it behind me and so went out of the house.

" That's over," I said to myself in the road, and was full of a desolating sense of relief. . . .

But presently her half-averted face began to haunt me as she had sat at the table, and her arm and the long droop of her shoulder.

§ 3

The next day I did an unexampled thing. I sent a telegram to my uncle, "*Bad temper not coming to business*," and set off for Highgate and Ewart. He was actually at work—on a bust of Millie, and seemed very glad for any interruption.

"Ewart, you old Fool," I said, "knock off and come for a day's gossip. I'm rotten. There's a sympathetic sort of lunacy about you. Let's go to Staines and paddle up to Windsor."

"Girl?" said Ewart, putting down a chisel.

"Yes."

That was all I told him of my affair.

"I've got no money," he remarked, to clear up any ambiguity in my invitation.

We got a jar of shandy-gaff, some food, and, on Ewart's suggestion, two Japanese sunshades in Staines; we demanded extra cushions at the boathouse and we spent an enormously soothing day in discourse and meditation, our boat moored in a shady place this side of Windsor. I seem to remember Ewart with a cushion forward, only his heels and sunshade and some black ends of hair showing, a voice and no more, against the shining, smoothly streaming mirror of the trees and bushes.

"It's not worth it," was the burthen of the voice.

"You'd better get yourself a Millie, Ponderevo, and then you wouldn't feel so upset."

"No," I said decidedly, "that's not my way. . . ."

A thread of smoke ascended from Ewart for a while, like smoke from an altar. . . .

"Everything's a muddle, and you think it isn't. Nobody knows where we are—because, as a matter of fact, we aren't anywhere. Are women property—or are they fellow creatures. Or a sort of proprietary goddesses? They're so obviously fellow creatures. You believe in the goddess?"

"No," I said, "that's not my idea."

"What is your idea?"

"Well——"

"H'm," said Ewart, in my pause.

"My idea," I said, "is to meet one person who will belong to me—to whom I shall belong—body and soul. No half-gods! Wait till she comes. If she comes at all. . . . We must come to each other young and pure."

"There's no such thing as a pure person or an impure person. . . . Mixed to begin with."

This was so manifestly true that it silenced me altogether.

"And if you belong to her and she to you, Ponderevo—which end's the head?"

I made no answer except an impatient "Oh!"

For a time we smoked in silence. . . .

"Did I tell you, Ponderevo, of a wonderful discovery I've made?" Ewart began presently.

"No," I said, "what is it?"

"There's no Mrs. Grundy."

"No?"

"No! Practically not. I've just thought all that business out. She's merely an instrument, Ponderevo. She's borne the blame. Grundy's a man. Grundy unmasked. Rather lean and out of sorts. Early middle-aged. With bunchy black whiskers and a worried eye. Been good so far, and it's fretting him! Moods! . . . There's Grundy in a state of sexual panic, for example—'For God's sake cover it up! They get together—they get together! It's too exciting! The most dreadful things are happening!' Rushing about—long arms going like a windmill. 'They must be kept apart!' Starts out for an absolute obliteration of everything—absolute separations. One side of the road for men, and the other for women, and a hoarding—without posters—between them. Every boy and girl to be sewn up in a sack and sealed, just the head and hands and feet out until twenty-one. Music abolished, calico garments for the lower animals! Sparrows to be suppressed—ab-so-lutely."

I laughed abruptly.

"Well, that's Mr. Grundy in one mood—and it puts Mrs. Grundy—— She's a much-maligned person, Ponderevo—a rake at heart—and it puts her in a most painful state of fluster—most painful! She's an amenable creature. When Grundy tells her things are shocking, she's shocked—pink and breathless. She goes about trying to conceal her profound sense of guilt behind a haughty expression. . . .

"Grundy meanwhile is in a state of complete whirlabout. Long lean knuckly hands pointing and gesticulating! 'They're still thinking of things—thinking of things! It's dreadful! They get it out of books. I can't imagine where they get it! I must watch! There're people over there whispering! Nobody ought to whisper! There's something suggestive in the mere act! Then, pictures! In the museums—things too

dreadful for words. Why can't we have pure art—with the anatomy all wrong and pure and nice—and pure fiction, pure poetry, instead of all this stuff with allusions—allusions? . . . Excuse me! There's something up behind that locked door! The keyhole! In the interests of public morality—yes, sir, as a pure good man—I insist—*I'll* look—it won't hurt *me*—I insist on looking—my duty—M-m-m—the keyhole!' "

He kicked his legs about extravagantly, and I laughed again.

"That's Grundy in one mood, Ponderevo. It isn't Mrs. Grundy. That's one of the lies we tell about women. They're too simple. Simple! Women *are* simple! They take on just what men tell 'em. . . ."

Ewart meditated for a space. "Just exactly as it's put to them," he said, and resumed the moods of Mr. Grundy.

"Then you get old Grundy in another mood. Ever caught him nosing, Ponderevo? Mad with the idea of mysterious, unknown, wicked, delicious things. Things that aren't respectable. Wow! Things he mustn't do! . . . Any one who knows about these things knows there's just as much mystery and deliciousness about Grundy's forbidden things as there is about eating ham. Jolly nice if it's a bright morning and you're well and hungry and having breakfast in the open air. Jolly unattractive if you're off colour. But Grundy's covered it all up and hidden it and put mucky shades and covers over it until he's forgotten it. Begins to fester round it in his mind. Has dreadful struggles with himself about impure thoughts. . . . Then you get Grundy with hot ears—curious in undertones. Grundy on the loose, Grundy in a hoarse whisper and with furtive eyes and convulsive movements—making things indecent. Evolving—in dense vapours—indecency!

"Grundy sins. Oh, yes he's a hypocrite. Sneaks round a corner and sins ugly. It's Grundy and his dark corners that makes vice, vice! We artists—we have no vices. And then he's frantic with repentance. And wants to be cruel to fallen women and decent harmless sculptors of the simple nude—like me—and so back to his panic again."

"Mrs. Grundy, I suppose, doesn't know he sins," I remarked.

"No? I'm not so sure. . . . But, bless her heart! She's a woman. . . . She's a woman.

"Then again you get Grundy with a large greasy smile—like an accident to a butter-tub—all over his face, being Liberal Minded—Grundy in his Anti-Puritan moments, 'trying not to see Harm in it'—Grundy the friend of innocent pleasure. He makes you sick with the Harm he's trying not to see in it. . . .

"And that's why everything's wrong, Ponderevo. Grundy, damn him! stands in the light, and we young people can't see. His moods affect us. We catch his gusts of panic, his disease of nosing, his greasiness. We don't know what we may think, what we may say. He does his silly utmost to prevent our reading and seeing the one thing, the one sort of discussion we find—quite naturally and properly—supremely interesting. So we don't adolesce; we blunder up to sex. Dare—dare to look—and he may dirt you for ever! The girls are terror-stricken to silence by his significant whiskers, by the bleary something in his eyes."

Suddenly Ewart, with an almost Jack-in-the-box effect, sat up.

"He's about us everywhere, Ponderevo," he said very solemnly. "Sometimes—sometimes I think he is—in our blood. In *mine*."

He regarded me for my opinion very earnestly, with his pipe in the corner of his mouth.

"You're the remotest cousin he ever had," I said. . . .

I reflected. "Look here, Ewart," I asked, "how would you have things different?"

He wrinkled up his queer face, regarded the water and made his pipe gurgle for a space, thinking deeply.

"There are complications, I admit. We've grown up under the terror of Grundy and that innocent—but docile and—yes—formidable lady, his wife. I don't know how far the complications aren't a disease, a sort of bleaching under the Grundy shadow. . . . It is possible there are things I have still to learn about women. . . . Man has eaten of the Tree of Knowledge. His innocence is gone. You can't have your cake and eat it. We're in for knowledge; let's have it plain and straight. I should begin, I think, by abolishing the ideas of decency and indecency. . . ."

"Grundy would have fits!" I interjected.

"Grundy, Ponderevo, would have cold douches—publicly—if the sight was not too painful—three times a day. . . . But I don't think, mind you, that I should let the sexes run about together. No. The fact behind the sexes—is sex. It's no good humbugging. It trails about—even in the best mixed company. Tugs at your ankle. The men get showing off and quarrelling—and the women. Or they're bored. I suppose the ancestral males have competed for the ancestral females ever since they were both some sort of grubby little reptile. You aren't going to alter that in a thousand years or so. . . . Never

should you have a mixed company, never—except with only one man or only one woman. How would that be ? . . ."

"Or duets only ? . . ."

"How to manage it ? Same rule of etiquette, perhaps." . . . He became portentously grave.

Then his long hand went out in weird gestures.

"I seem to see—I seem to see—a sort of City of Women, Ponderevo. Yes. . . . A walled enclosure—good stone-mason's work—a city wall, high as the walls of Rome, going about a garden. Dozens of square miles of garden—trees—fountains—arbours—lakes. Lawns on which the women play, avenues in which they gossip, boats. . . . Women like that sort of thing. Any woman who's been to a good eventful girls' school lives on the memory of it for the rest of her life. It's one of the pathetic things about women—the superiority of school and college to anything they get afterwards. And this city-garden of women will have beautiful places for music, places for beautiful dresses, places for beautiful work. Everything a woman can want. Nurseries. Kindergartens. Schools. And no man—except to do rough work, perhaps—ever comes in. The men live in a world where they can hunt and engineer, invent and mine and manufacture, sail ships, drink deep and practise the arts, and fight——"

"Yes," I said ; "but——"

He stilled me with a gesture.

"I'm coming to that. The homes of the women, Ponderevo, will be set in the wall of their city ; each woman will have her own particular house and home, furnished after her own heart in her own manner—with a little balcony on the outside wall. Built into the wall—and a little balcony. And there she will go and look out, when the mood takes her, and all round the city there will be a broad road and seats and great shady trees. And men will stroll up and down there when they feel the need of feminine company ; when, for instance, they want to talk about their souls or their characters or any of the things that only women will stand. . . . The women will lean over and look at the men and smile and talk to them as they fancy. And each woman will have this ; she will have a little silken ladder she can let down if she chooses—if she wants to talk closer. . . ."

"The men would still be competing."

"There perhaps—yes. But they'd have to abide by the women's decisions."

I raised one or two difficulties, and for a while we played with this idea.

"Ewart," I said, "this is like Dolls' Island."

"Suppose," I reflected, "an unsuccessful man laid siege to a balcony, and wouldn't let his rival come near it?"

"Move him on," said Ewart, "by a special regulation. As one does organ-grinders. No difficulty about that. And you could forbid it—make it against the etiquette. No life is decent without etiquette. . . . And people obey etiquette sooner than laws. . . ."

"Hm," I said, and was struck by an idea that is remote in the world of a young man. "How about children?" I asked; "in the City? Girls are all very well. But boys, for example—grow up."

"Ah!" said Ewart. "Yes. I forgot. They mustn't grow up inside. . . . They'd turn out the boys when they were seven. The father must come with a little pony and a little gun and manly wear, and take the boy away. Then one could come afterwards to one's mother's balcony. . . . It must be fine to have a mother. The father and the son. . . ."

"This is all very pretty in its way," I said at last, "but it's a dream. Let's come back to reality. What I want to know is, what are you going to do in Brompton, let us say, or Walham Green *now?*"

"Oh! damn it!" he remarked, "Walham Green! What a chap you are, Ponderevo!" and he made an abrupt end to his discourse. He wouldn't even reply to my tentatives for a time. . . .

"While I was talking just now," he remarked presently, "I had a quite different idea."

"What?"

"For a masterpiece. A series. Like the busts of the Cæsars. Only not heads, you know. We don't see the people who do things to us nowadays. . . ."

"How will you do it, then?"

"Hands—a series of hands! The hands of the Twentieth Century. I'll do it. Some day some one will discover it—go there—see what I have done, and what is meant by it."

"See it where?"

"On the tombs. Why not? The Unknown Master of the Highgate Slope! All the little, soft feminine hands, the nervous ugly males, the hands of the flops, and the hands of the snatchers! And Grundy's loose, lean, knuckly affair—Grundy the terror!—the little wrinkles and the thumb! Only it ought to hold all the others together—in a slightly disturbing squeeze. . . . Like Rodin's great Hand—you know the thing!"

§ 4

I forget how many days intervened between that last breaking off of our engagement and Marion's surrender. But I recall now the sharpness of my emotion, the concentrated spirit of tears and laughter in my throat as I read the words of her unexpected letter—" I have thought over everything, and I was selfish. . . ."

I rushed off to Walham Green that evening to give back all she had given me, to beat her altogether at giving. She was extraordinarily gentle and generous that time, I remember, and when at last I left her, she kissed me very sweetly.

So we were married.

We were married with all the customary incongruities. I gave—perhaps after a while not altogether ungrudgingly—and what I gave, Marion took with a manifest satisfaction. After all I was being sensible. So that we had three livery carriages to the church (one of the pairs of horses matched), and coachmen—with an improvised flavour and very shabby silk hats—bearing white favours on their whips, and my uncle intervened with splendour and insisted upon having a wedding-breakfast sent in from a caterer's in Hammersmith. The table had a great display of chrysanthemums, and there was orange blossom in the significant place and a wonderful cake. We also circulated upwards of a score of wedges of that accompanied by silver-printed cards in which Marion's name of Ramboat was stricken out by an arrow in favour of Ponderevo. We had a little rally of Marion's relations, and several friends and friend's friends from Smithie's appeared in the church and drifted vestryward. I produced my aunt and uncle—a select group of two. The effect in that shabby little house was one of exhilarating congestion. The sideboard, in which lived the table-cloth and the " Apartments " card, was used for a display of the presents, eked out by the unused balance of the silver-printed cards.

Marion wore the white raiment of a bride, white silk and satin, that did not suit her, that made her seem large and strange to me ; she obtruded bows and unfamiliar contours. She went through all this strange ritual of an English wedding with a sacramental gravity that I was altogether too young and egotistical to comprehend. It was all extraordinarily central and important to her ; it was no more than an offensive, complicated and disconcerting intrusion of a world I was already beginning to criticise very bitterly, to me. What was all this fuss for ? The mere indecent advertisement that I had been passionately in

love with Marion! I think, however, that Marion was only very remotely aware of my smouldering exasperation at having in the end behaved "nicely." I had played up to the extent of dressing my part; I had an admirably cut frock-coat, a new silk hat, trousers as light as I could endure them—lighter, in fact—a white waistcoat, light tie, light gloves. Marion, seeing me despondent, had the unusual enterprise to whisper to me that I looked lovely; I knew too well I didn't look myself. I looked like a special coloured supplement to *Men's Wear*, or *The Tailor and Cutter*, Full Dress For Ceremonial Occasions. I had even the disconcerting sensations of an unfamiliar collar. I felt lost—in a strange body, and when I glanced down myself for reassurance, the straight white abdomen, the alien legs confirmed that impression.

My uncle was my best man and looked like a banker—a little banker—in flower. He wore a white rose in his buttonhole. He wasn't, I think, particularly talkative. At least I recall very little from him.

"George," he said once or twice, "this a great occasion for you—a very great occasion." He spoke a little doubtfully.

You see I had told him nothing about Marion until about a week before the wedding; both he and my aunt had been taken altogether by surprise. They couldn't, as people say, "make it out." My aunt was intensely interested, much more than my uncle; it was then, I think, for the first time that I really saw that she cared for me. She got me alone, I remember, after I had made my announcement. "Now George," she said, "tell me everything about her. Why didn't you tell me—*me* at least—before?"

I was surprised to find how difficult it was to tell her about Marion. I perplexed her.

"Then is she beautiful?" she asked at last.

"I don't know what you'll think of her," I parried. "I think——"

"Yes?"

"I think she might be the most beautiful person in the world."

"And isn't she? To you?"

"Of course," I said, nodding my head. "Yes, she is. . . ."

And while I don't remember anything my uncle said or did at the wedding, I do remember very distinctly certain little things, scrutiny, solicitude, a curious rare flash of intimacy in my aunt's eyes. It dawned on me that I wasn't hiding anything from her at all. She was dressed very smartly, wearing a big-

plumed hat that made her neck seem longer and slenderer than ever, and when she walked up the aisle with that rolling stride of hers and her eye all on Marion, perplexed into self-forgetfulness, it wasn't somehow funny. She was, I do believe, giving my marrage more thought than I had done, she was concerned beyond measure at my black rage and Marion's blindness, she was looking with eyes that knew what loving is—for love.

In the vestry she turned away as we signed, and I verily believe she was crying, though to this day I can't say why she should have cried, and she was near crying too when she squeezed my hand at parting—and she never said a word or looked at me, but just squeezed my hand. . . .

If I had not been so grim in spirit, I think I should have found much of my wedding amusing. I remember a lot of ridiculous detail that still declines to be funny in my memory. The officiating clergyman had a cold, and turned his "n's" to "d's," and he made the most mechanical compliment conceivable about the bride's age when the register was signed. Every bride he had ever married had had it, one knew. And two middle-aged spinsters, cousins of Marion's and dressmakers at Barking, stand out. They wore marvellously bright and gay blouses and dim old skirts, and had an immense respect for Mr. Ramboat. They threw rice; they brought a whole bag with them and gave handsful away to unknown little boys at the church door and so created a Lilliputian riot, and one had meant to throw a slipper. It was a very worn old silk slipper I know, because she dropped it out of a pocket in the aisle—there was a sort of jumble in the aisle—and I picked it up for her. I don't think she actually threw it, for as we drove away from the church I saw her in a dreadful, and it seemed to me hopeless, struggle with her pocket; and afterwards my eye caught the missile of good fortune lying, it or its fellow most obviously mislaid, behind the umbrella-stand in the hall. . . .

The whole business was much more absurd, more incoherent, more human than I had anticipated, and I was far too young and serious to let the latter quality atone for its shortcomings. I am so remote from this phase of my youth that I can look back at it all as dispassionately as one looks at a picture—at some wonderful, perfect sort of picture that is inexhaustible; but at the time these things filled me with unspeakable resentment. Now I go round it all, look into its details, generalise about its aspects. I'm interested, for example, to square it with my Bladesover theory of the British social scheme. Under stress of tradition we were all of us trying in the fermenting chaos of

London to carry out the marriage ceremonies of a Bladesover tenant or one of the chubby middling sort of people in some dependent country town. There a marriage is a public function with a public significance. There the church is, to a large extent, the gathering-place of the community, and your going to be married a thing of importance to every one you pass on the road. It is a change of status that quite legitimately interests the whole neighbourhood. But in London there are no neighbours, nobody knows, nobody cares. An absolute stranger in an office took my notice, and our banns were proclaimed to ears that had never previously heard our names. The clergyman, even, who married us had never seen us before, and didn't in any degree intimate that he wanted to see us again.

Neighbours in London! The Ramboats did not know the names of the people on either side of them. As I waited for Marion before we started off upon our honeymoon flight, Mr. Ramboat, I remember, came and stood beside me and stared out of the window.

"There was a funeral over there yestiday," he said by way of making conversation, and moved his head at the house opposite. "Quite a smart affair it was—with a glass 'earse. . . ."

And our little procession of three carriages with white-favour-adorned horses and drivers went through all the huge, noisy indifferent traffic like a lost china image in the coal-chute of an ironclad. Nobody made way for us, nobody cared for us; the driver of an omnibus jeered; for a long time we crawled behind an unamiable dust-cart. The irrelevant clatter and tumult gave a queer flavour of indecency to this public coming together of lovers. We seemed to have obtruded ourselves shamelessly. The crowd that gathered outside the church would have gathered in the same spirit and with greater alacrity for a street accident. . . .

At Charing Cross—we were going to Hastings—the experienced eye of the guard detected the significance of our unusual costume and he secured us a compartment.

"Well," said I as the train moved out of the station, "*that's* all over!" And I turned to Marion—a little unfamiliar still in her unfamiliar clothes—and smiled.

She regarded me gravely, timidly.

"You're not cross?" she asked.

"Cross! Why?"

"At having it all proper."

"My dear Marion!" said I, and by way of answer took and kissed her white-gloved, leather-scented hand. . . .

I don't remember much else about the journey, an hour or so it was of undistinguished time—for we were both confused and a little fatigued and Marion had a slight headache and did not want caresses. I fell into a reverie about my aunt, and realised, as if it were a new discovery, that I cared for her very greatly. I was acutely sorry I had not told her earlier of my marriage. . . .

But you will not want to hear the history of my honeymoon. I have told all that was needed to serve my present purpose. Thus and thus it was the Will in things had its way with me. Driven by forces I did not understand, diverted altogether from the science, the curiosities and work to which I had once given myself, I fought my way through a tangle of traditions, customs, obstacles and absurdities, enraged myself, limited myself, gave myself to occupations I saw with the clearest vision were dishonourable and vain, and at last achieved the end of purblind Nature, the relentless immediacy of her desire, and held, far short of happiness, Marion weeping and reluctant in my arms.

§ 5

Who can tell the story of the slow estrangement of two married people, the weakening of first this bond and then that of that complex contact ? Least of all can one of the two participants. Even now, with an interval of fifteen years to clear it up for me, I still find a mass of impressions of Marion as confused, as discordant, as unsystematic and self-contradictory as life. I think of this thing and love her, of that and hate her—of a hundred aspects in which I can now see her with an unimpassioned sympathy. As I sit here trying to render some vision of this infinitely confused process, I recall moments of hard and fierce estrangement, moments of unclouded intimacy, the passages of transition all forgotten. We talked a little language together when we were " friends," and I was " Mutney " and she was " Ming," and we kept up such an outward show that till the very end Smithie thought our household the most amiable in the world.

I cannot tell to the full how Marion thwarted me and failed in that life of intimate emotions which is the kernel of love. That life of intimate emotions is made up of little things. A beautiful face differs from an ugly one by a difference of surfaces and proportions that are sometimes almost infinitesimally small. I find myself setting down little things and little things ;

none of them do more than demonstrate those essential temperamental discords I have already sought to make clear. Some readers will understand—to others I shall seem no more than an unfeeling brute who couldn't make allowances. . . . It's easy to make allowances now ; but to be young and ardent and to make allowances, to see one's married life open before one, the life that seemed in its dawn a glory, a garden of roses, a place of deep sweet mysteries and heart-throbs and wonderful silences, and to see it a vista of tolerations and baby-talk ! A compromise. The least effectual thing in all one's life.

Every love romance I read seemed to mock our dull intercourse, every poem, every beautiful picture reflected upon the uneventful succession of grey hours we had together. I think our real difference was one of æsthetic sensibility.

I do still recall as the worst and most disastrous aspect of all that time her absolute disregard of her own beauty. It's the pettiest thing to record, I know, but she could wear curl-papers in my presence. It was her idea too to " wear out " her old clothes and her failures at home when " no one was likely to see her "—" no one " being myself. She allowed me to accumulate a store of ungracious and slovenly memories. . . .

All our conceptions of life differed. I remember how we differed about furniture. We spent three or four days in Tottenham Court Road, and she chose the things she fancied with an inexorable resolution—sweeping aside my suggestions with—" Oh, *you* want such queer things." She pursued some limited, clearly seen and experienced ideal—that excluded all other possibilities. Over every mantel was a mirror that was draped, our sideboard was wonderfully good and splendid with bevelled glass, we had lamps on long metal stalks and cosy corners, and plants in grog-tubs. Smithie approved it all. There wasn't a place where one could sit and read in the whole house. My books went upon shelves in the dining-room recess. And we had a piano, though Marion's playing was at an elementary level. . . .

You know, it was the cruellest luck for Marion that I, with my restlessness, my scepticism, my constantly developing ideas, had insisted upon marriage with her. She had no faculty of growth or change ; she had taken her mould, she had set in the limited ideas of her peculiar class. She preserved her conception of what was right in drawing-room chairs and in marriage ceremonial and in every relation of life with a simple and luminous honesty and conviction, with an immense unimaginative inflexibility—as a tailor-bird builds its nest or a beaver makes its dam.

Let me hasten over this history of disappointments and separation. I might tell of waxings and wanings of love between us, but the whole was waning. Sometimes she would do things for me, make me a tie or a pair of slippers, and fill me with none the less gratitude because the things were absurd. She ran our home and our one servant with a hard, bright efficiency. She was inordinately proud of house and garden. Always, by her lights, she did her duty by me. . . .

Presently the rapid development of Tono-Bungay began to take me into the provinces, and I would be away sometimes for a week together. This she did not like; it left her "dull," she said, but after a time she began to go to Smithie's again and to develop an independence of me. At Smithie's she was now a woman with a position; she had money to spend. She would take Smithie to theatres and out to lunch and talk interminably of the business, and Smithie became a sort of permanent week-ender with us. Also Marion got a spaniel and began to dabble with the minor arts, with poker-work and a Kodak and hyacinths in glasses. She called once on a neighbour. Her parents left Walham Green—her father severed his connection with the gas-works—and came to live in a small house I took for them near us, and they were much with us.

Odd the littleness of the things that exasperate when the fountains of life are embittered! My father-in-law was perpetually catching me in moody moments and urging me to take to gardening. He irritated me beyond measure.

"You think too much," he would say. "If you was to let in a bit with a spade, you might soon 'ave that garden of yours a Vision of Flowers. That's better than thinking, George."

Or in a tone of exasperation: "I *carn't* think, George, why you don't get a bit of glass 'ere. This sunny corner you c'd do wonders with a bit of glass."

And in the summer time he never came in without performing a sort of conjuring trick in the hall, and taking cucumbers and tomatoes from unexpected points of his person. "All out o' *my* little bit," he'd say in exemplary tones. He left a trail of vegetable produce in the most unusual places, on mantelboards, sideboards, the tops of pictures. Heavens! how the sudden unexpected tomato could annoy me! . . .

It did much to widen our estrangement that Marion and my aunt failed to make friends, became, by a sort of instinct, antagonistic.

My aunt, to begin with, called rather frequently, for she

was really anxious to know Marion. At first she would arrive like a whirlwind and pervade the house with an atmosphere of hello! She dressed already with that cheerfully extravagant abandon that signalised her accession to fortune, and dressed her best for these visits. She wanted to play the mother to me, I fancy, to tell Marion occult secrets about the way I wore out my boots and how I never could think to put on thicker things in cold weather. But Marion received her with that defensive suspiciousness of the shy person, thinking only of the possible criticism of herself; and my aunt, perceiving this, became nervous and slangy. . . .

"She says such queer things," said Marion once, discussing her. "But I suppose it's witty."

"Yes," I said; "it *is* witty."

"If I said things like she does——"

The queer things my aunt said were nothing to the queer things she didn't say. I remember her in our drawing-room one day, and how she cocked her eye—it's the only expression—at the India-rubber plant in a Doulton-ware pot which Marion had placed on the corner of the piano.

She was on the very verge of speech. Then suddenly she caught my expression, and shrank up like a cat that has been discovered looking at the milk.

Then a wicked impulse took her.

"Didn't say an old word, George," she insisted, looking me full in the eye.

I smiled. "You're a dear," I said, "not to," as Marion came lowering into the room to welcome her. But I felt extraordinarily like a traitor—to the India-rubber plant I suppose—for all that nothing had been said. . . .

"Your aunt makes Game of people," was Marion's verdict, and, open-mindedly: "I suppose it's all right . . . for her."

Several times we went to the house in Beckenham for lunch, and once or twice to dinner. My aunt did her peculiar best to be friends, but Marion was implacable. She was also, I know, intensely uncomfortable, and she adopted as her social method an exhausting silence, replying compactly and without giving openings to anything that was said to her.

The gaps between my aunt's visits grew wider and wider. . . .

My married existence became at last like a narrow deep groove in the broad expanse of interests in which I was living. I went about the world; I met a great number of varied personalities; I read endless books in trains as I went to and fro. I developed social relationships at my uncle's house that

Marion did not share. The seeds of new ideas poured in upon me and grew in me. Those early and middle years of one's third decade are, I suppose, for a man the years of greatest mental growth. They are restless years and full of vague enterprise.

Each time I returned to Ealing, life there seemed more alien, narrow and unattractive—and Marion less beautiful and more limited and difficult—until at last she was robbed of every particle of her magic. She gave me each time a cooler welcome, I think, until she seemed entirely apathetic. I never asked myself then what heartaches she might hide, or what her discontents might be. I would come home hoping nothing, expecting nothing. This was my faded life and I had chosen it. I became more sensitive to the defects I had once disregarded altogether ; I began to associate her sallow complexion with her temperamental insufficiency, and the heavier lines of her mouth and nostril with her moods of discontent. We drifted apart ; wider and wider the gap opened. I tired of baby-talk and stereotyped little fondlings ; I tired of the latest intelligence from those wonderful workrooms, and showed it all too plainly ; we hardly spoke when we were alone together. The mere unreciprocated physical residue of my passion remained—an exasperation between us.

No children came to save us. Marion had acquired at Smithie's a disgust and dread of maternity. All that was the fruition and quintessence of the " horrid " elements in life, a disgusting thing, a last indignity that overtook unwary women. I doubt indeed a little if children would have saved us ; we should have differed so fatally about their up-bringing.

Altogether, I remember my life with Marion as a long distress, now hard, now tender. It was in those days that I first became critical of my life and burthened with a sense of error and maladjustment. I would lie awake in the night, asking myself the purpose of things, reviewing my unsatisfying, ungainly home-life, my days spent in rascal enterprise and rubbish-selling, contrasting all I was being and doing with my adolescent ambitions, my Wimblehurst dreams. My circumstances had an air of finality, and I asked myself in vain why I had forced myself into them.

§ 6

The end of our intolerable situation came suddenly and unexpectedly, but in a way that I suppose was almost inevitable. My alienated affections wandered, and I was unfaithful to Marion.

I won't pretend to extenuate the quality of my conduct. I was a young and fairly vigorous man ; all my appetite for love had been roused and whetted and none of it had been satisfied by my love affair and my marriage. I had pursued an elusive gleam of beauty to the disregard of all else, and it had failed me. It had faded when I had hoped it would grow brighter. I despaired of life and was embittered. And things happened as I am telling. I don't draw any moral at all in the matter, and as for social remedies, I leave them to the social reformer. I've got to a time of life when the only theories that interest me are generalisations about realities.

To go to our inner office in Raggett Street, I had to walk through a room in which the typists worked. They were the correspondence typists ; our books and invoicing had long since overflowed into the premises we had had the luck to secure on either side of us. I was, I must confess, always, in a faintly, cloudily emotional way, aware of that collection of, for the most part, round-shouldered femininity, but presently one of the girls detached herself from the others and got a real hold upon my attention. I appreciated her at first as a straight little back, a neater back than any of the others ; as a softly rounded neck with a smiling necklace of sham pearls ; as chestnut hair very neatly done—and as a side-long glance. Presently as a quickly turned face that looked for me.

My eye would seek her as I went through on business things—I dictated some letters to her and so discovered she had pretty, soft-looking hands with pink nails. Once or twice, meeting casually, we looked one another for the flash of a second in the eyes.

That was all. But it was enough in the mysterious free-masonry of sex to say essential things. We had a secret between us.

One day I came into Raggett Street at lunch time and she was alone, sitting at her desk. She glanced up as I entered, and then became very still, with a downcast face and her hands clenched on the table. I walked right by her to the door of the inner office, stopped, came back and stood over her.

We neither of us spoke for quite a perceptible time. I was trembling violently.

" Is that one of the new typewriters ? " I asked at last for the sake of speaking.

She looked up at me without a word, with her face flushed and her eyes alight, and I bent down and kissed her lips. She leant back to put an arm about me, drew my face to her and kissed

me again and again. I lifted her and held her in my arms. She gave a little smothered cry to feel herself so held.

Never before had I known the quality of passionate kisses. . . .

Somebody became audible in the shop outside.

We started back from one another with flushed faces and bright and burning eyes.

" We can't talk here," I whispered with a confident intimacy. " Where do you go at five ? "

" Along the Embankment to Charing Cross," she answered as intimately. " None of the others go that way. . . ."

" About half-past five ? "

" Yes, half-past five. . . ."

The door from the shop opened, and she sat down very quickly.

" I'm glad," I said in a commonplace voice, " that these new typewriters are all right."

I went into the inner office and routed out the pay-sheet in order to find her name—Effie Rink. And I did no work at all that afternoon. I fretted about that dingy little den like a beast in a cage.

When presently I went out, Effie was working with an extraordinary appearance of calm—and there was no look for me at all. . . .

We met and had our talk that evening, a talk in whispers when there was none to overhear ; we came to an understanding. It was strangely unlike any dream of romance I had ever entertained.

§ 7

I came back, after a week's absence, to my home again—a changed man. I had lived out my first rush of passion for Effie, had come to a contemplation of my position. I had gauged Effie's place in the scheme of things, and parted from her for a time. She was back in her place at Raggett Street after a temporary indisposition. I did not feel in any way penitent or ashamed, I know, as I opened the little cast-iron gate that kept Marion's front garden and Pampas Grass from the wandering dog. Indeed, if anything, I felt as if I had vindicated some right that had been in question. I came back to Marion with no sense of wrong-doing at all—with, indeed, a new friendliness towards her. I don't know how it may be proper to feel on such occasions ; that is how I felt.

I found her in our drawing-room, standing beside the tall

lamp-stand that half filled the bay as though she had just turned from watching for me at the window. There was something in her pale face that arrested me. She looked as if she had not been sleeping. She did not come forward to greet me.

"You've come home," she said.

"As I wrote to you."

She stood very still, a dusky figure against the bright window.

"Where have you been?" she asked.

"East Coast," I said easily.

She paused for a moment. "I *know*," she said.

I stared at her. It was the most amazing moment in my life. . . .

"By Jove!" I said at last, "I believe you do!"

"And then you come home to me!"

I walked to the hearthrug and stood quite still there regarding this new situation.

"I didn't dream," she began. "How could you do such a thing?"

It seemed a long interval before either of us spoke another word.

"Who knows about it?" I asked at last.

"Smithie's brother. They were at Cromer."

"Confound Cromer! Yes!"

"How could you bring yourself——"

I felt a spasm of petulant annoyance at this unexpected catastrophe.

"I should like to wring Smithie's brother's neck," I said. . . .

Marion spoke in dry broken fragments of sentences. "You . . . I'd always thought that anyhow *you* couldn't deceive me. . . . I suppose all men are horrid—about this."

"It doesn't strike me as horrid. It seems to me the most necessary consequence—and natural thing in the world."

I became aware of some one moving about in the passage, and went and shut the door of the room. Then I walked back to the hearthrug and turned.

"It's rough on you," I said. "But I didn't mean you to know. You've never cared for me. I've had the devil of a time. Why should you mind?"

She sat down in a draped arm-chair. "I *have* cared for you," she said.

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I suppose," she said, "*she* cares for you?"

I had no answer.

"Where is she now?"

"Oh! does it matter to you? . . . Look here, Marion! This—this I didn't anticipate. I didn't mean this thing to smash down on you like this. But, you know, something had to happen. I'm sorry—sorry to the bottom of my heart that things have come to this between us. But indeed I'm taken by surprise. I don't know where I am—I don't know how we got here. Things took me by surprise. I found myself alone with her one day. I kissed her. I went on. It seemed stupid to go back. And besides—why should I have gone back? Why should I? From first to last, I've hardly thought of it as touching you. . . . Damn!"

She scrutinised my face, and pulled at the ball-fringe of the little table beside her.

"To think of it," she said. "I don't believe. . . . I can ever touch you again."

We kept a long silence. I was only beginning to realise in the most superficial way, the immense catastrophe that had happened between us. Enormous issues had rushed upon us. I felt unprepared and altogether inadequate. I was unreasonably angry. There came a rush of stupid expressions to my mind that my rising sense of the supreme importance of the moment saved me from saying. The gap of silence widened until it threatened to become the vast memorable margin of some one among a thousand trivial possibilities of speech that would fix our relations for ever.

Our little general servant tapped at the door—Marion always liked the servant to tap—and appeared.

"Tea, M'm," she said—and vanished, leaving the door open.

"I will go upstairs," said I, and stopped. "I will go upstairs," I repeated, "and put my bag in the spare room."

We remained motionless and silent for a few seconds.

"Mother is having tea with us to-day," Marion remarked at last, and dropped the worried end of ball-fringe and stood up slowly. . . .

And so, with this immense discussion of our changed relations hanging over us, we presently had tea with the unsuspecting Mrs. Ramboat and the spaniel. Mrs. Ramboat was too well trained in her position to remark upon our sombre preoccupation. She kept a thin trickle of talk going, and told us, I remember, that Mr. Ramboat was "troubled" about his cannas.

"They don't come up, and they won't come up. He's been round and had an explanation with the man who sold him the bulbs—and he's very heated and upset."

The spaniel was a great bore, begging and doing small tricks

first at one and then at the other of us. Neither of us used his name. You see we had called him Miggles, and made a sort of trio in the baby-talk of Mutney and Miggles and Ming.

§ 8

Then presently we resumed our monstrous, momentous duologue. I can't now make out how long that duologue went on. It spread itself, I know, in heavy fragments over either three days or four. I remember myself grouped with Marion, talking sitting on our bed in her room, talking standing in our dining-room, saying this thing or that. Twice we went for long walks. And we had a long evening alone together, with jaded nerves and hearts that fluctuated between a hard and dreary recognition of facts and, on my part at least, a strange unwonted tenderness. Because, in some extraordinary way, this crisis had destroyed our mutual apathy and made us feel one another again.

It was a duologue that had discrepant parts, that fell into lumps of talk that failed to join on to their predecessors, that began again at a different level, higher or lower, that assumed new aspects in the intervals and assimilated new considerations. We discussed the fact that we two were no longer lovers ; never before had we faced that. It seems a strange thing to write, but as I look back I see clearly that those several days were the time when Marion and I were closest together, looked for the first and last time faithfully and steadfastly into each other's eyes. For those days only there were no pretences, I made no concessions to her nor she to me ; we concealed nothing, exaggerated nothing. We had done with pretending. We had it out plainly and soberly with each other. Mood followed mood and got its stark expression.

Of course there was quarrelling between us, bitter quarrelling, and we said things to one another—long pent-up things that bruised and crushed and cut. But over it all in my memory now is an effect of deliberate confrontation, and the figure of Marion stands up, pale, melancholy, tear-stained, injured, implacable and dignified.

" You love her ? " she asked once, and jerked that doubt into my mind.

I struggled with tangled ideas and emotions. " I don't know what love is. It's all sorts of things—it's made of a dozen strands, twisted in a thousand ways."

" But you want her ? You want her now—when you think of her ? "

"Yes," I reflected. "I want her—right enough."

"And me? Where do I come in?"

"I suppose you come in here."

"Well, but what are you going to do?"

"Do!" I said with the exasperation of the situation growing upon me. "What do you want me to do?"

As I look back on all that time—across a gulf of fifteen active years—I find I see it with an understanding judgment. I see it as if it were the business of some one else—indeed of two other people—intimately known yet judged without passion. I see now that this shock, this sudden immense disillusionment, did in real fact bring out a mind and soul in Marion; that for the first time she emerged from habits, timidities, imitations, phrases and a certain narrow will-impulse, and became a personality.

Her ruling motive at first was, I think, an indignant and outraged pride. This situation must end. She asked me categorically to give up Effie, and I, full of fresh and glowing memories, absolutely refused.

"It's too late, Marion," I said. "It can't be done like that."

"Then we can't very well go on living together," she said. "Can we?"

"Very well," I deliberated, "if you must have it so."

"Well, can we?"

"Can you stay in this house? I mean—if I go away?"

"I don't know. . . . I don't think I could."

"Then—what do you want?"

Slowly we worked our way from point to point, until at last the word "divorce" was before us.

"If we can't live together we ought to be free," said Marion.

"I don't know anything of divorce," I said—"if you mean that. I don't know how it is done. I shall have to ask somebody—or look it up. . . . Perhaps, after all, it is the thing to do. We may as well face it."

We began to talk ourselves into a realisation of what our divergent futures might be. I came back on the evening of that day with my questions answered by a solicitor.

"We can't as a matter of fact," I said, "get divorced as things are. Apparently, so far as the law goes, you've got to stand this sort of thing. It's silly—but that is the law. However, it's easy to arrange a divorce. In addition to adultery there must be desertion or cruelty. To establish cruelty I should have to strike you, or something of that sort, before witnesses. That's impossible—but it's simple to desert you—legally. I have to go

away from you ; that's all. I can go on sending you money—and you bring a suit, what is it ?—for Restitution of Conjugal Rights. The Court orders me to return. I disobey. Then you can go on to divorce me. You get a Decree Nisi, and once more the Court tries to make me come back. If we don't make it up within six months and if you don't behave scandalously—the Decree is made absolute. That's the end of the fuss. That's how one gets unmarried. It's easier, you see, to marry than unmarry.

"And then—how do I live ? What becomes of me ? "

"You'll have an income. They call it alimony. From a third to a half of my present income—more if you like—I don't mind—three hundred a year, say. You've got your old people to keep, and you'll need all that."

"And then—then you'll be free ? "

"Both of us."

"And all this life you've hated——"

I looked up at her wrung and bitter face. "I haven't hated it," I lied, my voice near breaking with the pain of it all. "Have you ? "

§ 9

The perplexing thing about life is the irresoluble complexity of reality, of things and relations alike. Nothing is simple. Every wrong done has a certain justice in it, and every good deed has dregs of evil. As for us, young still, and still without self-knowledge, we sounded a hundred discordant notes in the harsh jangle of that shock. We were furiously angry with each other, tender with each other, callously selfish, generously self-sacrificing.

I remember Marion saying innumerable detached things that didn't hang together one with another, that contradicted one another, that were nevertheless all in their places profoundly true and sincere. I see them now as so many vain experiments in her effort to apprehend the crumpled confusions of our complex moral landslip. Some I found irritating beyond measure. I answered her—sometimes quite abominably.

"Of course," she would say again and again, "my life has been a failure."

"I've beseiged you for three years," I would retort, "asking it not to be. You've done as you pleased. If I've turned away at last——"

Or again she would revive all the stresses before our marriage.

"How you must hate me ! I made you wait. Well, now—I suppose you have your revenge."

"*Revenge!*" I echoed.

Then she would try over the aspects of our new separated lives.

"I ought to earn my own living," she would insist. "I want to be quite independent. I've always hated . . . Perhaps I shall try a poultry farm and bees. You won't mind at first my being a burden. Afterwards——"

"We've settled all that," I said.

"I suppose you will hate me anyhow. . . ."

There were times when she seemed to regard our separation with absolute complacency, when she would plan all sorts of freedoms and characteristic interests.

"I shall go out a lot with Smithie," she said.

And once she said an ugly thing that I did indeed hate her for, that I cannot even now quite forgive her.

"Your aunt will rejoice at all this. She never cared for me. . . ."

Into my memory of these pains and stresses comes the figure of Smithie, full-charged with emotion, so breathless in the presence of the horrid villain of the piece that she could make no articulate sounds. She had long tearful confidences with Marion, I know, sympathetic close clingings. There were moments when only absolute speechlessness prevented her giving me a stupendous "talking to"—I could see it in her eye. The wrong things she would have said! And I recall too, Mrs. Ramboat's slow awakening to something in the air, the growing expression of solicitude in her eye, only her well-trained fear of Marion keeping her from speech. . . .

And at last through all this welter, like a thing fated and altogether beyond our control, parting came to Marion and me.

I hardened my heart, or I could not have gone. For at the last it came to Marion that she was parting from me for ever. That overbore all other things, and turned our last hour to anguish. She forgot for a time the prospect of moving into a new house, she forgot the outrage on her proprietorship and pride. For the first time in her life she really showed strong emotions in regard to me, for the first time, perhaps, they really came to her. She began to weep slow reluctant tears. I came into her room, and found her asprawl on the bed weeping.

"I didn't know," she cried. "Oh! I didn't understand!

"I've been a fool. All my life is a wreck!

"I shall be alone! . . . *Mutney!* Mutney, don't leave me! Oh! Mutney! I didn't understand."

I had to harden my heart indeed, for it seemed to me at

moments in those last hours together that at last, too late, the longed-for thing had happened and Marion had come alive. A new-born hunger for me lit her eyes.

"Don't leave me!" she said, "don't leave me!" She clung to me; she kissed me with tear-salt lips. . . .

I was promised now and pledged, and I hardened my heart against this impossible dawn. Yet it seems to me that there were moments when it needed but a cry, but one word to have united us again for all our lives. Could we have united again? Would that passage have enlightened us for ever or should we have fallen back in a week or so into the old estrangement, the old temperamental opposition?

Of that there is now no telling. Our own resolve carried us on our predestined way. We behaved more and more like separating lovers, parting inexorably, but all the preparations we had set going worked on like a machine, and we made no attempt to stop them. My trunks and boxes went to the station. I packed my bag with Marion standing before me. We were like children who had hurt each other horribly in sheer stupidity, who didn't know now how to remedy it. We belonged to each other immensely—immensely. The cab came to the little iron gate.

"Good-bye!" I said.

"Good-bye."

"For a moment we held one another in each other's arms and kissed—incredibly without malice. We heard our little servant in the passage going to open the door. For the last time we pressed ourselves to one another. We were not lovers nor enemies but two human souls in a frank community of pain. I tore myself from her.

"Go away," I said to the servant, seeing that Marion had followed me down.

I felt her standing behind me as I spoke to the cabman.

I got into the cab, resolutely not looking back, and then as it started jumped up, craned out and looked at the door.

It was wide open, but she had disappeared. . . .

I wonder—I suppose she ran upstairs.

§ 10

So I parted from Marion at an extremity of perturbation and regret, and went, as I had promised and arranged, to Effie, who was waiting for me in apartments near Orpington. I remember her upon the station platform, a bright, flitting figure

looking along the train for me, and our walk over the fields in the twilight. I had expected an immense sense of relief when at last the stresses of separation were over, but now I found I was beyond measure wretched and perplexed, full of the profoundest persuasion of irreparable error. The dusk and sombre Marion were so alike, her sorrow seemed to be all about me. I had to hold myself to my own plans, to remember that I must keep faith with Effie, with Effie who had made no terms, exacted no guarantees, but flung herself into my hands.

We went across the evening fields in silence, towards a sky of deepening gold and purple, and Effie was close beside me always, very close, glancing up ever and again at my face.

Certainly she knew I grieved for Marion, that ours was now no joyful reunion. But she showed no resentment and no jealousy. Extraordinarily, she did not compete against Marion. Never once in all our time together did she say an adverse word of Marion. . . .

She set herself presently to dispel the shadow that brooded over me with the same instinctive skill that some women will show with the trouble of a child. She made herself my glad and pretty slave and handmaid ; she forced me at last to rejoice in her. Yet at the back of it all, Marion remained, stupid and tearful and infinitely distressful, so that I was almost intolerably unhappy for her—for her and the dead body of my married love.

It is all, as I tell it now, unaccountable to me. I go back into these remote parts, these rarely visited uplands and lonely tarns of memory, and it seems to me still a strange country. I had thought I might be going to some sensuous paradise with Effie, but desire which fills the universe before its satisfaction vanishes utterly—like the going of daylight—with achievement. All the facts and forms of life remain darkling and cold. It was an upland of melancholy questionings, a region from which I saw all the world at angles and in new aspects ; I had outflanked passion and romance.

I had come into a condition of vast perplexities. For the first time in my life, at least so it seems to me now in this retrospect, I looked at my existence as a whole.

Since this was nothing, what was I doing ? What was I for ?

I was going to and fro about Tono-Bungay—the business I had taken up to secure Marion, and which held me now in spite of our ultimate separation—and snatching odd week-ends and nights for Orpington, and all the while I struggled with these

obstinate interrogations. I used to fall into musing in the trains, I became even a little inaccurate and forgetful about business things. I have the clearest memory of myself sitting thoughtful in the evening sunlight on a grassy hillside that looked towards Sevenoaks and commanded a wide sweep of country, and thinking out my destiny. I could almost write my thoughts down now, I believe, as they came to me that afternoon. Effie, restless little cockney that she was, rustled and struggled in a hedgerow below, gathering flowers, discovering flowers she had never seen before. I had, I remember, a letter from Marion in my pocket. I had even made some tentatives for return, for a reconciliation; Heaven knows now how I had put it! but her cold, ill-written letter repelled me. I perceived I could never face that old inconclusive dulness of life again, that stagnant disappointment. That, anyhow, wasn't possible. But what was possible? I could see no way of honour or fine living before me at all.

"What am I to do with life?" that was the question that besieged me.

I wondered if all the world was even as I, urged to this by one motive and to that by another, creatures of chance and impulse and unmeaning traditions. Had I indeed to abide by what I had said and done and chosen? Was there nothing for me in honour but to provide for Effie, go back penitent to Marion and keep to my trade in rubbish—or find some fresh one—and so work out the residue of my days? I didn't accept that for a moment. But what else was I to do? I wondered if my case was the case of many men, whether in former ages, too, men had been so guideless, so uncharted, so haphazard in their journey into life. In the Middle Ages, in the old Catholic days, one went to a priest, and he said, with all the finality of natural law, this you are and this you must do. I wondered whether even in the Middle Ages I should have accepted that ruling without question. . . .

I remember, too, very distinctly how Effie came and sat beside me on a little box that was before the casement window of our room.

"Gloomkins," said she.

I smiled and remained, head on hand, looking out of the window, forgetful of her.

"Did you love your wife so well?" she whispered softly.

"Oh!" I cried, recalled again; "I don't know. I don't understand these things. Life is a thing that hurts, my dear! It hurts without logic or reason. I've blundered! I didn't

understand. Anyhow—there is no need to go hurting you, is there ? ”

And I turned about and drew her to me, and kissed her ear. . . .

Yes, I had a very bad time—I still recall. I suffered, I suppose, from a sort of *ennui* of the imagination. I found myself without an object to hold my will together. I sought. I read restlessly and discursively. I tried Ewart and got no help from him. As I regard it all now in this retrospect, it seems to me as if in those days of disgust and abandoned aims I discovered myself for the first time. Before that I had seen only the world and things in it, had sought them self-forgetful of all but my impulse. Now I found myself *grouped*, with a system of appetites and satisfactions, with much work to do—and no desire, it seemed, left in me.

There were moments when I thought of suicide. At times my life appeared before me in bleak, relentless light, a series of ignorances, crude blunderings, degradation and cruelty. I had what the old theologians call a “ conviction of sin.” I sought salvation—not perhaps in the formulæ a Methodist preacher would recognise—but salvation nevertheless.

Men find their salvation nowadays in many ways. Names and forms don’t, I think, matter very much, the real need is something that we can hold and that holds one. I have known a man find that determining factor in a dry-plate factory, and another in writing a history of the Manor. So long as it holds one, it does not matter. Many men and women nowadays take up some concrete aspect of Socialism or social reform. But Socialism for me has always been a little bit too human, too set about with personalities and foolishness. It isn’t my line. I don’t like things so human. I don’t think I’m blind to the fun, the surprises, the jolly little coarsenesses and the insufficiency of life, to the “ humour of it,” as people say, and to adventure, but that isn’t the root of the matter with me. There’s no human in my blood. I’m in earnest in warp and woof. I stumble and flounder, but I know that over all these merry immediate things there are other things that are great and serene, very high, beautiful things—the reality. I haven’t got it, but it’s there nevertheless. I’m a spiritual guttersnipe in love with unimaginable goddesses. I’ve never seen the goddesses nor ever shall—but it takes all the fun out of the mud—and at times I fear it takes all the kindliness too.

But I’m talking of things I can’t expect the reader to understand, because I don’t half understand them myself. There is

something links things for me, a sunset or so, a mood or so, the high air, something there was in Marion's form and colour, something I find and lose in Mantegna's pictures, something in the lines of these boats I make. (You should see X2, my last and best !)

I can't explain myself, I perceive. Perhaps all comes to this, that I am a hard and morally limited cad with a mind beyond my merits. Naturally I resist that as a complete solution. Anyhow—I had a sense of inexorable need, of distress and insufficiency that was unendurable, and for a time this aeronautical engineering allayed it. . . .

In the end of this particular crisis of which I tell so badly, I idealised Science. I decided that in power and knowledge lay the salvation of my life, the secret that would fill my need ; that to these things I would give myself. I emerged at last like a man who has been diving in darkness, clutching at a new resolve, for which he has groped desperately and long.

I came into the inner office suddenly one day—it must have been just before the time of Marion's suit for restitution—and sat down before my uncle.

"Look here," I said, "I'm sick of this."

"Hul*lo !*" he answered, and put some papers aside.
"What's up, George ?"

"Things are wrong."

"As how ?"

"My life," I said, "it's a mess, an infinite mess."

"She's been a stupid girl, George," he said ; "I partly understand. But you're quit of her now, practically, and there's just as good fish in the sea——"

"Oh ! it's not that," I cried. "That's only the part that shows. I'm sick—— I'm sick of all this damned rascality."

"Eh ? Eh ?" said my uncle. "*What*—rascality ?"

"Oh, *you* know. I want some *stuff*, man. I want something to hold on to. I shall go amok if I don't get it. I'm a different sort of beast from you. You float in all this bunkum. *I* feel like a man floundering in a universe of soapsuds, up and down, east and west. I can't stand it. I must get my foot on something solid or—I don't know what."

I laughed at the consternation in his face.

"I mean it," I said. "I've been thinking it over. I've made up my mind. It's no good arguing. I shall go in for work—real work. No ! this isn't work ; it's only laborious cheating. I've got an idea ! It's an old idea—I thought of it

years ago, but it came back to me. Look here! Why should I fence about with you? I believe the time has come for flying to be possible. Real flying!"

"Flying!"

"Up in the air. Aeronautics! Machine heavier than air. It can be done. And I want to do it."

"Is there money in it, George?"

"I don't know nor care. But that's what I'm going to do."

I stuck to that, and it helped me through the worst time of my life. My uncle, after some half-hearted resistance and a talk with my aunt, behaved like the father of a spoilt son. He fixed up an arrangement that gave me capital to play with, released me from too constant a solicitude for the newer business developments—this was in what I may call the later Moggs period of our enterprises—and I went to work at once with grim intensity. . . .

But I will tell of my soaring and flying-machines in the proper place; I've been leaving the story of my uncle altogether too long. I wanted merely to tell how it was I took to this work. I took to these experiments after I had sought something that Marion in some indefinable way had seemed to promise. I toiled and forgot myself for a time and did many things. Science, too, has been something of an irresponsive mistress since, though I've served her better than I served Marion. But at that time Science, with her order, her inhuman distance, her steely certainties, saved me from despair.

Well, I have still to fly; but incidentally I have invented the lightest engines in the world. . . .

I am trying to tell of all the things that happened to me. It's hard enough simply to get it put down in the remotest degree right. But this is a novel, not a treatise. Don't imagine that I am coming presently to any sort of solution of my difficulties. Here, among my drawings and hammerings *now*, I still question unanswering problems. All my life has been, at bottom, *seeking*, disbelieving always, dissatisfied always with the thing seen and the thing believed, seeking something in toil, in force, in danger, something whose name and nature I do not clearly understand, something beautiful, worshipful, enduring, mine profoundly and fundamentally, and the utter redemption of myself; I don't know—all I can tell is that it is something I have ever failed to find.

§ 11

But before I finish this chapter and book altogether and go on with the great adventure of my uncle's career, I may perhaps tell what else remains to tell of Marion and Effie, and then for a time set my private life behind me.

For a time Marion and I corresponded with some regularity, writing friendly but rather uninforming letters about small business things. The clumsy process of divorce completed itself. She left the house at Ealing and went into the country with her aunt and parents, taking a small farm near Lewes, in Sussex. She put up glass, she put in heat for her father, happy man! and spoke of figs and peaches. The thing seemed to promise well throughout a spring and summer, but the Sussex winter after London was too much for the Ramboats. They got very muddy and dull; Mr. Ramboat killed a cow by improper feeding and that disheartened them all. A twelvemonth saw the enterprise in difficulties. I had to help her out of this, and then they returned to London and she went into partnership with Smithie at Streatham, and ran a business that was intimated on the firm's stationery as "Robes." The parents and aunt were stowed away in a cottage somewhere. After that the letters became infrequent. But in one I remember a postscript that had a little stab of our old intimacy: "Poor old Miggles is dead."

Nearly eight years slipped by. I grew up. I grew in experience, in capacity, until I was fully a man, busy with many new interests, living on a larger scale in a wider world than I could have dreamt of in my Marion days. Her letters became rare and insignificant. At last came a gap of silence that made me curious. For eighteen months or more I had nothing from Marion save her quarterly receipts through the bank. Then I damned at Smithie and wrote a card to Marion.

"Dear Marion," I said, "how goes it?"

She astonished me tremendously by telling me she had married again—"a Mr. Wachorn, a leading agent in the paper-pattern trade." But she still wrote on the Ponderevo and Smith (Robes) notepaper, from the Ponderevo and Smith address.

And that, except for a little difference of opinion about the continuance of alimony which gave me some passages of anger, and the use of my name by the firm which also annoyed me, is the end of Marion's history for me, and she vanishes out of this story. I do not know where she is or what she is doing. I do not know whether she is alive or dead. It seems to me

utterly grotesque that two people who have stood so close to one another as she and I, should be so separated, but so it is between us.

Effie, too, I have parted from, though I still see her at times. Between us there was never any intention of marriage nor intimacy of soul. She had a sudden fierce hot-blooded passion for me and I for her, but I was not her first lover nor her last. She was in another world from Marion. She had a queer delightful nature; I've no memory of ever seeing her sullen or malicious. She was—indeed she was magnificently—eupeptic. That I think was the central secret of her agreeableness, and moreover she was infinitely kind-hearted. I helped her at last into an opening she coveted, and she amazed me by a sudden display of business capacity. She has now a typewriting bureau in Riffle's Inn, and she runs it with a brisk vigour and considerable success, albeit a certain plumpness has overtaken her. And she still loves her kind. She married a year or so ago a boy half her age—a wretch of a poet, a wretched poet and given to drugs, a thing with lank fair hair always getting into his blue eyes, and limp legs. She did it, she said, because he needed nursing. . . .

But enough of this disaster of my marriage and of my early love affairs; I have told all that is needed for my picture to explain how I came to take up aeroplane experiments and engineering science; let me get back to my essential story, to Tono-Bungay and my uncle's promotions and to the vision of the world these things have given me.

BOOK THE THIRD: THE GREAT DAYS OF TONO-BUNGAY

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE HARDINGHAM HOTEL, AND HOW WE BECAME BIG PEOPLE

§ 1

But now that I resume the main line of my story it may be well to describe the personal appearance of my uncle as I remember him during those magnificent years that followed his passage from trade to finance. The little man plumped up very considerably during the creation of the Tono-Bungay property, but with the increasing excitements that followed that first flotation came dyspepsia and a certain flabbiness and falling away. His abdomen—if the reader will pardon my taking his features in the order of their value—had at first a nice full roundness, but afterwards it lost tone without however losing size. He always went as though he was proud of it and would make as much of it as possible. To the last his movements remained quick and sudden; his short firm legs, as he walked, seemed to twinkle rather than display the scissors-stride of common humanity, and he never seemed to have knees, but instead, a dispersed flexibility of limb.

There was, I seem to remember, a secular intensification of his features, his nose developed character, became aggressive, stuck out at the world more and more; the obliquity of his mouth I think increased. From the face that returns to my memory projects a long cigar that is sometimes cocked jauntily up from the higher corner, that sometimes droops from the lower;—it was as eloquent as a dog's tail, and he removed it only for the more emphatic modes of speech. He assumed a broad black ribbon for his glasses, and wore them more and more askew as time went on. His hair seemed to stiffen with success, but towards the climax it thinned greatly over the crown and he brushed it hard back over his ears where, however, it stuck out fiercely. It always stuck out fiercely over his forehead, up and forward.

He adopted an urban style of dressing with the onset of Tono-Bungay and rarely abandoned it. He preferred silk hats with ample rich brims, often a trifle large for him by modern ideas, and he wore them at various angles to his axis ; his taste in trouserings was towards fairly emphatic stripes and his trouser cut was neat ; he liked his frock-coat long and full although that seemed to shorten him. He displayed a number of valuable rings, and I remember one upon his left little finger with a large red stone bearing Gnostic symbols. "Clever chaps, those Gnostics, George," he told me. "Means a lot. Lucky!" He never had any but a black mohair watch-chain. In the country he affected grey and a large grey cloth top-hat, except when motoring ; then he would have a brown deer-stalker cap and a fur suit of Esquimaux cut with a sort of boot-end to the trousers. Of an evening he would wear white waistcoats and plain gold studs. He hated diamonds. "Flashy," he said they were. "Might as well wear an income-tax receipt. All very well for Park Lane. Unsold stock. Not my style. Sober financier, George."

So much for his visible presence. For a time it was very familiar to the world, for at the crest of the boom he allowed quite a number of photographs and at least one pencil sketch to be published in the sixpenny papers. . . . His voice declined during those years from his early tenor to a flat rich quality of sound that my knowledge of music is inadequate to describe. His Zzzz-ing inrush of air became less frequent as he ripened, but returned in moments of excitement. Throughout his career, in spite of his increasing and at last astounding opulence, his more intimate habits remained as simple as they had been at Wimblehurst. He would never avail himself of the services of a valet ; at the very climax of his greatness his trousers were folded by a housemaid and his shoulders brushed as he left his house or hotel. He became wary about breakfast as life advanced, and at one time talked much of Dr. Haig and uric acid. But for other meals he remained reasonably omnivorous. He was something of a gastronome, and would eat anything he particularly liked in an audible manner, and perspire upon his forehead. He was a studiously moderate drinker—except when the spirit of some public banquet or some great occasion caught him and bore him beyond his wariness—then he would as it were drink inadvertently and become flushed and talkative—about everything but his business projects.

To make the portrait complete one wants to convey an effect of sudden, quick bursts of movement like the jumps of a

Chinese-cracker to indicate that his pose, whatever it is, has been preceded and will be followed by a rush. If I were painting him, I should certainly give him for a background that distressed, uneasy sky that was popular in the eighteenth century, and at a convenient distance a throbbing motor-car, very big and contemporary, a secretary hurrying with papers, and an alert chauffeur.

Such was the figure that created and directed the great property of Tono-Bungay, and from the successful reconstruction of that company passed on to a slow crescendo of magnificent creations and promotions until the whole world of investors marvelled. I have already, I think, mentioned how, long before we offered Tono-Bungay to the public, we took over the English agency of certain American specialities. To this was presently added our exploitation of Moggs' Domestic Soap, and so he took up the Domestic Convenience Campaign that, coupled with his equatorial rotundity and a certain resolute convexity in his bearing, won my uncle his Napoleonic title.

§ 2

It illustrates the romantic element in modern commerce that my uncle met young Moggs at a city dinner—I think it was the Bottle-makers' Company—when both were some way advanced beyond the initial sobriety of the occasion. This was the grandson of the original Moggs, and a very typical instance of an educated, cultivated, degenerate plutocrat. His people had taken him about in his youth, like the Ruskins took their John, and fostered a passion for history in him, and the actual management of the Moggs' industry had devolved upon a cousin and a junior partner. Mr. Moggs, being of a studious and refined disposition, had just decided—after a careful search for a congenial subject in which he would not be constantly reminded of soap—to devote himself to the History of the Thebaid when this cousin died suddenly and precipitated responsibilities upon him. In the frankness of conviviality, Moggs bewailed the uncongenial task thus thrust into his hands, and my uncle offered to lighten his burden by a partnership then and there. They even got to terms—extremely muzzy terms, but terms nevertheless.

Each gentleman wrote the name and address of the other on his cuff, and they separated in a mood of brotherly carelessness, and next morning neither seems to have thought to rescue his shirt from the wash until it was too late. My uncle made a

painful struggle—it was one of my business mornings—to recall name and particulars.

"He was an aquarium-faced, long, blonde sort of chap, George, with glasses and a genteel accent," he said.

I was puzzled. "Aquarium-faced?"

"You know how they look at you. His stuff was soap, I'm pretty nearly certain. And he had a name. And the thing was the straightest Bit-of-All-Right you ever. I was clear enough to spot that. . . ."

We went out at last with knitted brows, and wandered up into Finsbury seeking a good, well-stocked-looking grocer. We called first on a chemist for a pick-me-up for my uncle, and then we found the shop we needed.

"I want," said my uncle, "half a pound of every sort of soap you got. Yes, I want to take them now. . . . Wait a moment, George. . . . Now whassort of soap d'you call *that?*"

At the third repetition of that question the young man said, "Moggs' Domestic."

"Right," said my uncle. "You needn't guess again. Come along, George, let's go to a telephone and get on to Moggs. Oh—the order? Certainly. I confirm it. Send it all—send it all to the Bishop of London; he'll have some good use for it—(First-rate man, George, he is—charities and all that)—and put it down to me—here's a card—Ponderevo—Tono-Bungay."

Then we went on to Moggs and found him in a camel-hair dressing-jacket in a luxurious bed, drinking China tea, and got the shape of everything but the figures fixed by lunch time.

Young Moggs enlarged my mind considerably; he was a sort of thing I hadn't met before; he seemed quite clean and well-informed, and he assured me he never read newspapers nor used soap in any form at all. "Delicate skin," he said.

"No objection to our advertising you wide and free?" said my uncle.

"I draw the line at railway stations," said Moggs, "south-coast cliffs, theatre programmes, books by me and poetry generally—scenery—oh!—and the *Mercure de France*."

"We'll get along," said my uncle.

"So long as you don't annoy me," said Moggs, lighting a cigarette, "you can make me as rich as you like."

We certainly made him no poorer. His was the first firm that was advertised by a circumstantial history; we even got to illustrated magazine articles telling of the quaint past of Moggs. We concocted Moggsiana. Trusting to our partner's

pre-occupation with the uncommercial aspects of life, we gave graceful histories of Moggs the First, Moggs the Second, Moggs the Third, and Moggs the Fourth. You must, unless you are very young, remember some of them and our admirable block of a Georgian shop window. My uncle bought early nineteenth-century memoirs, soaked himself in the style, and devised stories about old Moggs the First and the Duke of Wellington, George the Third and the soap dealer (" almost certainly old Moggs "). Very soon we had added to the original Moggs' Primrose several varieties of scented and superfatted, a " special nursery—as used in the household of the Duke of Kent and for the old Queen in Infancy," a plate powder, " the Paragon," and a knife powder. We roped in a good little second-rate black-lead firm, and carried their origins back into the mists of antiquity. It was my uncle's own unaided idea that we should associate that commodity with the Black Prince. He became industriously curious about the past of black-lead. I remember his button-holeing the president of the Pepys Society.

" I say, is there any black-lead in Pepys ? You know—black-lead—for grates ! *Or does he pass it over as a matter of course ?* "

He became in those days the terror of eminent historians. " Don't want your drum and trumpet history—no fear," he used to say. " Don't want to know who was who's mistress, and why so-and-so devastated such a province ; that's bound to be all lies and upsy-down anyhow. Not my affair. Nobody's affair now. Chaps who did it didn't clearly know. . . . What I want to know is, in the Middle Ages Did they Do Anything for Housemaid's Knee ? What did they put in their hot baths after jousting, and was the Black Prince—you know the Black Prince—was he enamelled or painted, or what? I think myself, black-leaded —very likely—like pipe-clay—but *did* they use blacking so early ? "

So it came about that in designing and writing those Moggs' Soap Advertisements, that wrought a revolution in that department of literature, my uncle was brought to realise not only the lost history, but also the enormous field for invention and enterprise that lurked among the little articles, the dustpans and mincers, the mousetraps and carpet-sweepers that fringe the shops of the oilman and domestic ironmonger. He was recalled to one of the dreams of his youth, to his conception of the Ponderevo Patent Flat that had been in his mind so early as the days before I went to serve him at Wimblehurst. " The Home, George," he said, " wants straightening up. Silly muddle ! Things that get in the way. Got to organise it."

For a time he displayed something like the zeal of a genuine social reformer in relation to these matters.

"We've got to bring the Home Up to Date? That's my idee, George. We got to make a civilised d'mestic machine out of these relics of barbarism. I'm going to hunt up inventors, make a corner in d'mestic idees. Everything. Balls of string that won't dissolve into a tangle, and gum that won't dry into horn. See? Then after conveniences—beauty. Beauty, George! All these new things ought to be made fit to look at, it's your aunt's idee, that. Beautiful jam-pots! Get one of those new art chaps to design all the things they make ugly now. Patent carpet-sweepers by these greenwood chaps, housemaid's boxes it'll be a pleasure to fall over—rich coloured house-flannels. Zzzz. Pails, f'rinstance. Hang 'em up on the walls like warming-pans. All the polishes and things in such tins—you'll want to cuddle 'em, George! See the notion? 'Sted of all the silly ugly things we got. . . ."

We had some magnificent visions; they so affected me that when I passed ironmongers' and oil-shops they seemed to me as full of promise as trees in late winter, flushed with the effort to burst into leaf and flower. . . . And really we did do much towards that new brightness these shops display. They were dingy things in the eighties compared to what our efforts have made them now, grey quiet displays. . . .

Well, I don't intend to write down here the tortuous financial history of Moggs' Limited, which was our first development of Moggs and Sons; nor will I tell very much of how from that we spread ourselves with a larger and larger conception throughout the chandlery and minor ironmongery, how we became agents for this little commodity, partners in that, got a tentacle round the neck of a specialised manufacturer or so, secured a pull upon this or that supply of raw material, and so prepared the way for our second flotation, Domestic Utilities;—"Do Ut," they rendered it in the City. And then came the reconstruction of Tono-Bungay, and then "Household Services" and the Boom!

That sort of development is not to be told in detail in a novel. I have, indeed, told much of it elsewhere. It is to be found set out at length, painfully at length, in my uncle's examination and mine in the bankruptcy proceedings, and in my own various statements after his death. Some people know everything in that story, some know it all too well, most do not want the details, it is the story of a man of imagination among figures, and unless you are prepared to collate columns of pounds, shillings and pence, compare dates and check additions, you will

find it very unmeaning and perplexing. And after all, you wouldn't find the early figures so much wrong as *strained*. In the matter of Moggs and Do Ut, as in the first Tono-Bungay promotion and in its reconstruction, we left the court by City standards without a stain on our characters. The great amalgamation of Household Services was my uncle's first really big-scale enterprise and his first display of bolder methods; for this we bought back Do Ut, Moggs (going strong with a seven per cent. dividend) and acquired Skinnerton's polishes, the Riffleshaw properties and the Runcorn's mincer and coffee-mill business. To that Amalgamation I was really not a party; I left it to my uncle because I was then beginning to get keen upon the soaring experiments I had taken on from the results then to hand of Lilienthal, Pilcher and the Wright brothers. I was developing a glider into a flyer. I meant to apply power to this glider as soon as I could work out one or two residual problems affecting the longitudinal stability. I knew that I had a sufficiently light motor in my own modification of Bridger's light turbine, but I knew too that until I had cured my aeroplane of a tendency demanding constant alertness from me, a tendency to jerk up its nose at unexpected moments and slide back upon me, the application of an engine would be little short of suicide.

But that I will tell about later. The point I was coming to was that I did not realise until after the crash how recklessly my uncle had kept his promise of paying a dividend of over eight per cent. on the ordinary shares of that hugely over-capitalised enterprise, Household Services.

I drifted out of business affairs into my research much more than either I or my uncle had contemplated. Finance was much less to my taste than the organisation of the Tono-Bungay factory. In the new field of enterprise there was a great deal of bluffing and gambling, of taking chances and concealing material facts—and these are hateful things to the scientific type of mind. It wasn't fear I felt so much as an uneasy inaccuracy. I didn't realise dangers, I simply disliked the sloppy, relaxing quality of this new sort of work. I was at last constantly making excuses not to come up to him in London. The latter part of his business career recedes therefore beyond the circle of my particular life. I lived more or less with him; I talked, I advised, I helped him at times to fight his Sunday crowd at Crest Hill, but I did not follow nor guide him. From the Do Ut time onward he rushed up the financial world like a bubble in water and left me like some busy water-thing down below in the deeps.

Anyhow he was an immense success. The public was, I

think, particularly attracted by the homely familiarity of his field of work—you never lost sight of your investment, they felt, with the name on the house-flannel and shaving-strop—and its allegiance was secured by the Egyptian solidity of his apparent results. Tono-Bungay, after its reconstruction, paid thirteen, Moggs seven, Domestic Utilities had been a safe-looking nine; here was Household Services with eight; on such a showing he had merely to buy and sell Roeburn's Antiseptic fluid, Razor soaps and Bath crystals in three weeks to clear twenty thousand pounds. I do think that as a matter of fact Roeburn's was good value at the price at which he gave it to the public—at least until it was strained by ill-conceived advertisement. It was a period of expansion and confidence; much money was seeking investment and "Industrials" were the fashion. Prices were rising all round. There remained little more for my uncle to do therefore, in his climb to the high unstable crest of Financial Greatness, but, as he said, to "grasp the cosmic oyster, George, while it gaped," which being translated meant for him to buy respectable businesses confidently and courageously at the vendor's estimate, add thirty or forty thousand to the price and sell them again. His sole difficulty indeed was the tactful management of the load of shares that each of these transactions left upon his hands. But I thought so little of these later things that I never fully appreciated the peculiar inconveniences of that until it was too late to help him.

§ 3

When I think of my uncle near the days of his Great Boom and in connection with the actualities of his enterprises, I think of him as I used to see him in the suite of rooms he occupied in the Hardingham Hotel, seated at a great old oak writing-table, smoking, drinking, and incoherently busy; that was his typical financial aspect—our evenings, our mornings, our holidays, our motor-car expeditions, Lady Grove and Crest Hill belong to an altogether different set of memories.

These rooms in the Hardingham were a string of apartments along one handsome thick-carpeted corridor. All the doors upon the corridor were locked except the first; and my uncle's bedroom, breakfast-room and private sanctum were the least accessible and served by an entrance from the adjacent passage, which he also used at times as a means of escape from importunate callers. The most external room was a general waiting-room and very business-like in quality; it had one or two uneasy sofas, a number

of chairs, a green baize table, and a collection of the very best Moggs and Tono posters ; and the plush carpets normal to the Hardingham had been replaced by a grey-green cork linoleum. Here I would always find a remarkable miscellany of people, presided over by a peculiarly faithful and ferocious-looking commissionaire, Ropper, who guarded the door that led a step nearer my uncle. Usually there would be a parson or so, one or two widows ; hairy, eye-glassy, middle-aged gentlemen, some of them looking singularly like Edward Ponderevos who hadn't come off, a variety of young and youngish men more or less attractively dressed, some with papers protruding from their pockets, others with their papers decently concealed. And wonderful incidental, frowsy people.

All these persons maintained a practically hopeless siege—sometimes for weeks together ; they had better have stayed at home. Next came a room full of people who had some sort of appointment, and here one would find smart-looking people, brilliantly dressed, nervous women hiding behind magazines, Nonconformist divines, clergy in gaiters, real business men, these latter for the most part gentlemen in admirable morning dress who stood up and scrutinised my uncle's taste in water-colours manfully and sometimes by the hour together. Young men again were here of various social origins—young Americans, treasonable clerks from other concerns, university young men, keen-looking, most of them, resolute, reserved but on a sort of hair trigger, ready at any moment to be most voluble, most persuasive. This room had a window too, looking out into the hotel courtyard with its fern-set fountains and mosaic pavement, and the young men would stand against this and sometimes even mutter. One day I heard one repeating in an urgent whisper as I passed, "But you don't quite see, Mr. Ponderevo, the full advantages, the *full* advantages——" I met his eye and he was embarrassed.

Then came a room with a couple of secretaries—no type-writers because my uncle hated the clatter—and a casual person or two sitting about, projectors whose projects were being entertained. Here and in a further room nearer the private apartments, my uncle's correspondence underwent an exhausive process of pruning and digestion before it reached him. Then the two little rooms in which my uncle talked ; my magic uncle who had *got* the investing public—to whom all things were possible.

As one came in one would find him squatting with his cigar up and an expression of dubious beatitude upon his face,

while some one urged him to grow still richer by this or that.

"Thatju, George?" he used to say. "Come in. Here's a thing. Tell him—Mister—over again. Have a drink, George? No! Wise man! Liss'n."

I was always ready to listen. All sorts of financial marvels came out of the Hardingham, more particularly during my uncle's last great flurry, but they were nothing to the projects that passed in. It was the little brown and gold room he sat in usually. He had had it redecorated by Bordingly and half a dozen Sussex pictures by Webster hung about it. Latterly he wore a velveteen jacket of a golden brown colour in this apartment that I think over-emphasised its æsthetic intention and he also added some gross Chinese bronzes. . . .

He was on the whole a very happy man throughout all that wildly enterprising time. He made and, as I shall tell in its place, spent great sums of money. He was constantly in violent motion, constantly stimulated mentally and physically and rarely tired. About him was an atmosphere of immense deference; much of his waking life was triumphal and all his dreams. I doubt if he had any dissatisfaction with himself at all until the crash bore him down. Things must have gone very rapidly with him. . . . I think he must have been very happy.

As I sit here writing about all these things, jerking down notes and throwing them aside in my attempt to give some literary form to the tale of our promotions, the marvel of it all comes to me as if it came for the first time, the supreme unreason of it. At the climax of his Boom, my uncle at the most sparing estimate must have possessed in substance and credit about two million pounds' worth of property to set off against his vague colossal liabilities, and from first to last he must have had a controlling influence in the direction of nearly thirty millions. This irrational muddle of a community in which we live gave him that, paid him at that rate for sitting in a room and scheming and telling it lies. For he created nothing, he invented nothing, he economised nothing. I cannot claim that a single one of the great businesses we organised added any real value to human life at all. Several like Tono-Bungay were unmitigated frauds by any honest standard, the giving of nothing, coated in advertisements, for money. And the things the Hardingham gave out, I repeat, were nothing to the things that came in. I think of the long procession of people who sat down before us and propounded this and that. Now it was a device for selling bread under a fancy name and so escaping the laws

as to weight—this was afterwards floated as the Decorticated Health-Bread Company and bumped against the law—now it was a new scheme for still more strident advertisement, now it was a story of unsuspected deposits of minerals, now a cheap and nasty substitute for this or that common necessity, now the treachery of a too well-informed employé, anxious to become our partner. It was all put to us tentatively, persuasively. Sometimes one had a large pink blusterous person trying to carry us off our feet by his pseudo-boyish frankness, now some dyspeptically yellow whisperer, now some earnest, specially dressed youth with an eye-glass and a buttonhole, now some homely-speaking, shrewd Manchester man or some Scotchman eager to be very clear and full. Many came in couples or trios, often in tow of an explanatory solicitor. Some were white and earnest, some flustered beyond measure at their opportunity. Some of them begged and prayed to be taken up. My uncle chose what he wanted and left the rest. He became very autocratic to these applicants. He felt he could make them, and they felt so too. He had but to say "No!" and they faded out of existence. . . . He had become a sort of vortex to which wealth flowed of its own accord. His possessions increased by heaps; his shares, his leaseholds and mortgages and debentures.

Behind his first-line things he found it necessary at last, and sanctioned by all the precedents, to set up three general trading companies, the London and African Investment Company, the British Traders' Loan Company, and Business Organisations Limited. That was in the culminating time when I had least to do with affairs. I don't say that with any desire to exculpate myself, I admit I was a director of all three, and I will confess I was wilfully incurious in that capacity. Each of these companies ended its financial year solvent by selling great holdings of shares to one or other of its sisters, and paying a dividend out of the proceeds. I sat at the table and agreed. That was our method of equilibrium at the iridescent climax of the bubble. . . .

You perceive now, however, the nature of the services for which this fantastic community gave him unmanageable wealth and power and real respect. It was all a monstrous payment for courageous fiction, a gratuity in return for the one reality of human life—illusion. We gave them a feeling of hope and profit; we sent a tidal wave of water and confidence into their stranded affairs. "We mint Faith, George," said my uncle one day. "That's what we do. And by Jove we got to keep

minting! We been making human confidence ever since I drove the first cork of Tono-Bungay."

"Coining" would have been a better word than minting! And yet, you know, in a sense he was right. Civilisation is possible only through confidence, so that we can bank our money and go unarmed about the streets. The bank reserve or a policeman keeping order in a jostling multitude of people are only slightly less impudent *bluffs* than my uncle's prospectuses. They couldn't for a moment "make good" if the quarter of what they guarantee was demanded of them. The whole of this modern mercantile investing civilisation is indeed such stuff as dreams are made of. A mass of people swelters and toils, great railway systems grow, cities arise to the skies and spread wide and far, mines are opened, factories hum, foundries roar, ships plough the seas, countries are settled; about this busy striving world the rich owners go, controlling all, enjoying all, confident and creating the confidence that draws us all together into a reluctant, nearly unconscious brotherhood. I wonder and plan my engines. The flags flutter, the crowds cheer, the legislatures meet. Yet it seems to me indeed at times that all this present commercial civilisation is no more than my poor uncle's career writ large, a swelling, thinning bubble of assurances; that its arithmetic is just as unsound, its dividends as ill-advised, its ultimate aim as vague and forgotten; that it all drifts on perhaps to some tremendous parallel to his individual disaster. . . .

Well, so it was we Boomed, and for four years and a half we lived a life of mingled substance and moonshine. Until our particular unsoundness overtook us we went about in the most magnificent of motor-cars upon tangible high roads, made ourselves conspicuous and stately in splendid houses, ate sumptuously and had a perpetual stream of notes and money trickling into our pockets; hundreds of thousands of men and women respected us, saluted us and gave us toil and honour; I asked, and my worksheds rose, my aeroplanes swooped out of nothingness to scare the downland pewits; my uncle waved his hand and Lady Grove and all its associations of chivalry and ancient peace were his; waved again, and architects were busy planning the great palace he never finished at Crest Hill and an army of workmen gathered to do his bidding, blue marble came from Canada, and timber from New Zealand; and beneath it all, you know, there was nothing but fictitious values as evanescent as rainbow gold.

§ 4

I pass the Hardingham ever and again and glance aside through the great archway at the fountain and the ferns, and think of those receding days when I was so near the centre of our eddy of greed and enterprise. I see again my uncle's face white and intent, and hear him discourse, hear him make consciously Napoleonic decisions, "grip" his nettles, put his "finger on the spot," "bluff," say "snap." He became particularly addicted to the last idiom. Towards the end every conceivable act took the form of saying "snap!" . . .

The odd fish that came to us! And among others came Gordon-Nasmyth, that queer blend of romance and illegality who was destined to drag me into the most irrelevant adventure in my life, the Mordet Island affair; and leave me, as they say, with blood upon my hands. It is remarkable how little it troubles my conscience and how much it stirs my imagination, that particular memory of the life I took. The story of Mordet Island has been told in a Government report and told all wrong; there are still excellent reasons for leaving it wrong in places, but the liveliest appeals of discretion forbid my leaving it out altogether.

I've still the vividest memory of Gordon-Nasmyth's appearance in the inner sanctum, a lank, sunburnt person in tweeds with a yellow-brown, hatchet face and one faded blue eye—the other was a closed and sunken lid—and how he told us with a stiff affectation of ease his incredible story of this great heap of quap that lay abandoned or undiscovered on the beach behind Mordet Island among white, dead mangroves and the black ooze of brackish water.

"What's quap?" said my uncle on the fourth repetition of the word.

"They call it quap, or quab, or quabb," said Gordon-Nasmyth; "but our relations weren't friendly enough to get the accent right. . . . But there the stuff is for the taking. They don't know about it. Nobody knows about it. I got down to the damned place in a canoe alone. The boys wouldn't come. I pretended to be botanising. . . ."

To begin with, Gordon-Nasmyth was inclined to be dramatic.

"Look here," he said when he first came in, shutting the door rather carefully behind him as he spoke, "do you two men—yes or no—want to put up six thousand—for a clear good chance of fifteen hundred per cent. on your money in a year?"

"We're always getting chances like that," said my uncle, cocking his cigar offensively, wiping his glasses and tilting his chair back. "We stick to a safe twenty."

Gordon-Nasmyth's quick temper showed in a slight stiffening of his attitude.

"Don't you believe him," said I, getting up before he could reply. "*You're* different, and I know your books. We're very very glad you've come to us. Confound it, uncle! It's Gordon-Nasmyth! Sit down. What is it? Minerals?"

"Quap," said Gordon-Nasmyth, fixing his eye on me, "in heaps."

"In heaps," said my uncle softly, with his glasses very oblique.

"You're only fit for the grocery," said Gordon-Nasmyth scornfully, sitting down and helping himself to one of my uncle's cigars. "I'm sorry I came. But, still, now I'm here. . . . And first as to quap; quap, sir, is the most radio-active stuff in the world. That's quap! It's a festering mass of earths and heavy metals, polonium, radium, ythorium, thorium, carium, and new things too. There's a stuff called Xk—provisionally. There they are, mucked up together in a sort of rotting sand. What it is, how it got made, I don't know. It's like as if some young creator had been playing about there. There it lies in two heaps, one small, one great, and the world for miles about it is blasted and scorched and dead. You can have it for the getting. You've got to take it—that's all! . . ."

"That sounds all right," said I. "Have you samples?"

"Well—*should* I? You can have anything—up to two ounces."

"Where is it? . . ."

His blue eye smiled at me and scrutinised me. He smoked and was fragmentary for a time, fending off my questions; then his story began to piece itself together. He conjured up a vision of this strange forgotten kink in the world's littoral, of the long meandering channels that spread and divaricate and spend their burthen of mud and silt within the thunderbelt of Atlantic surf, of the dense tangled vegetation that creeps into the shimmering water with root and sucker. He gave a sense of heat and a perpetual reek of vegetable decay, and told how at last comes a break among these things, an arena fringed with bone-white dead trees, a sight of the hard blue sea-line beyond the dazzling surf and a wide desolation of dirty shingle and mud, bleached and scarred. . . . A little way off among charred dead weeds stands the abandoned station—abandoned because every

man who stayed two months at that station stayed to die, eaten up mysteriously like a leper—with its dismantled sheds and its decaying pier of worm-rotten and oblique piles and planks, still insecurely possible. And in the midst, two clumsy heaps shaped like the backs of hogs, one small, one great, sticking out under a rib of rock that cuts the space across—quap !

" There it is," said Gordon-Nasmyth, " worth three pounds an ounce, if it's worth a penny ; two great heaps of it, rotten stuff and soft, ready to shovel and wheel, and you may get it by the ton ! "

" How did it get there ? "

" God knows ! . . . There it is—for the taking ! In a country where you musn't trade. In a country where the company waits for good kind men to find it riches and then take 'em away from 'em. There you have it—derelict."

" Can't you do any sort of deal ? "

" They're too damned stupid You've got to go and take it. That's all."

" They might catch you."

" They might of course. But they're not great at catching."

We went into the particulars of that difficulty. " They wouldn't catch me, because I'd sink first. Give me a yacht," said Gordon-Nasmyth ; " that's all I need."

" But if you get caught," said my uncle. . . .

I am inclined to think Gordon-Nasmyth imagined we would give him a cheque for six thousand pounds on the strength of his talk. It was very good talk, but we didn't do that. I stipulated for samples of his stuff for analysis, and he consented —reluctantly. I think, on the whole, he would rather I didn't examine samples. He made a motion pocketwards, that gave us an invincible persuasion that he had a sample upon him, and that at the last instant he decided not to produce it prematurely. There was evidently a curious strain of secretiveness in him. He didn't like to give us samples, and he wouldn't indicate within three hundred miles the position of this Mordet Island of his. He had it clear in his mind that he had a secret of immense value, and he had no idea at all of just how far he ought to go with business people. And so presently, to gain time for these hesitations of his, he began to talk of other things.

He talked very well. He talked of the Dutch East Indies and of the Congo, of Portuguese East Africa and Paraguay, of Malays and rich Chinese merchants, Dyaks and negroes and the spread of the Mahometan world in Africa to-day. And all this time he was trying to judge if we were good enough to trust with his

adventure. Our cosy inner office became a little place, and all our businesses cold and lifeless exploits beside his glimpses of strange minglings of men, of slayings unavenged and curious customs, of trade where no writs run, and the dark treacheries of Eastern ports and uncharted channels.

We had neither of us gone abroad except for a few vulgar raids on Paris, our world was England, and the places of origin of half the raw material of the goods we sold had seemed to us as remote as fairyland or the forest of Arden. But Gordon-Nasmyth made it so real and intimate for us that afternoon—for me, at any rate—that it seemed like something seen and forgotten and now again remembered.

And in the end he produced his sample, a little lump of muddy clay speckled with brownish grains, in a glass bottle wrapped about with lead and flannel—red flannel it was, I remember—a hue which is, I know, popularly supposed to double all the mystical efficacies of flannel.

"Don't carry it about on you," said Gordon-Nasmyth. "It makes a sore."

I took the stuff to Thorold, and Thorold had the exquisite agony of discovering two new elements in what was then a confidential analysis. He has christened them and published since, but at the time Gordon-Nasmyth wouldn't hear for a moment of our publication of any facts at all; indeed, he flew into a violent passion and abused me mercilessly even for showing the stuff to Thorold. "I thought you were going to analyse it yourself," he said with the touching persuasion of the layman that a scientific man knows and practises all the sciences.

I made some commercial inquiries, and there seemed even then much truth in Gordon-Nasmyth's estimate of the value of the stuff. It was before the days of Capern's discovery of the value of canadium and his use of it in the Capern filament, but the cerium and thorium alone were worth the money he extracted for the gas-mantles then in vogue. There were, however, doubts. Indeed, there were numerous doubts. What were the limits of the gas-mantle trade? How much thorium, not to speak of cerium, could they take at a maximum? Suppose that quantity was high enough to justify our ship-load! came doubts in another quarter. Were the heaps up to sample? Were they as big as he said? Was Gordon-Nasmyth—imaginative? And if these values held, could we after all get the stuff? It wasn't ours. It was on forbidden ground. You see, there were doubts of every grade and class in the way of this adventure.

We went some way, nevertheless, in the discussion of his project, though I think we tried his patience. Then suddenly he vanished from London, and I saw no more of him for a year and a half.

My uncle said that was what he had expected, and when at last Gordon-Nasmyth reappeared and mentioned in an incidental way that he had been to Paraguay on private (and we guessed passionate) affairs, the business of the "quap" expedition had to be begun again at the beginning. My uncle was disposed to be altogether sceptical, but I wasn't so decided. I think I was drawn by its picturesque aspects. But we neither of us dreamt of touching it seriously until Capern's discovery.

Nasmyth's story had laid hold of my imagination like one small, intense picture of tropical sunshine hung on a wall of grey business affairs. I kept it going during Gordon-Nasmyth's intermittent appearances in England. Every now and then he and I would meet and reinforce its effect. We would lunch in London, or he would come to see my gliders at Crest Hill, and make new projects for getting at those heaps again, now with me, now alone. At times they became a sort of fairy-story with us, an imaginative exercise. And then came Capern's discovery of what he called the ideal filament, and with it an altogether less problematical quality about the business side of quap. For the ideal filament needed five per cent. of canadium, and canadium was known to the world only as a newly separated constituent of a variety of the rare mineral rutile. But to Thorold it was better known as an element in a mysterious sample brought to him by me, and to me it was known as one of the elements in quap. I told my uncle, and we jumped on to the process at once. We found that Gordon-Nasmyth, still unaware of the altered value of the stuff, and still thinking of the experimental prices of radium and the rarity value of cerium, had got hold of a cousin named Pollack, made some extraordinary transaction about his life insurance policy, and was buying a brig. We cut in, put down three thousand pounds and forthwith the life insurance transaction and the Pollack side of this finance vanished into thin air, leaving Pollack, I regret to say, in the brig and in the secret—except so far as canadium and the filament went—as residuum. We discussed earnestly whether we should charter a steamer or go on with the brig, but we decided on the brig as a less conspicuous instrument for an enterprise that was after all, to put it plainly, stealing.

But that was one of our last enterprises before our great crisis, and I will tell of it in its place.

So it was quap came into our affairs, came in as a fairy-tale and became real. More and more real it grew until at last it was real, until at last I saw with my eyes the heaps my imagination had seen for so long and felt between my fingers again the half-gritty, half-soft texture of quap, like sanded moist-sugar mixed with clay in which there stirs something——

One must feel it to understand.

§ 5

All sorts of things came to the Hardingham and offered themselves to my uncle. Gordon-Nasmyth stands out only because he played a part at last in the crisis of our fortunes. So much came to us that it seemed to me at times as though the whole world of human affairs was ready to prostitute itself to our real and imaginary millions. As I look back, I am still dazzled and incredulous to think of the quality of our opportunities. We did the most extraordinary things; things that it seems absurd to me to leave to any casual man of wealth and enterprise who cares to do them. I had some amazing perceptions of just how modern thought and the supply of fact to the general mind may be controlled by money. Among other things that my uncle offered for, he tried very hard to buy the *British Medical Journal* and the *Lancet*, and run them on what he called modern lines, and when they resisted him he talked very vigorously for a time of organising a rival enterprise. That was a very magnificent idea indeed in its way; it would have given a tremendous advantage in the handling of innumerable specialities, and indeed I scarcely know how far it would not have put the medical profession in our grip. It still amazes me—I shall die amazed—that such a thing can be possible in the modern State. If my uncle failed to bring the thing off, some one else may succeed. But I doubt, even if he had got both those weeklies, whether his peculiar style would have suited them. The change of purpose would have shown. He would have found it difficult to keep up their dignity.

He certainly did not keep up the dignity of the *Sacred Grove*, an important critical organ which he acquired one day—by saying "snap"—for eight hundred pounds. He got it "lock, stock and barrel"—under one or other of which three aspects the editor was included. Even at that price it didn't pay. If you are a literary person you will remember the bright new cover he gave that representative organ of British intellectual culture, and how his sound business instincts jarred with the

exalted pretensions of a vanishing age. One old wrapper I discovered the other day runs :

"THE SACRED GROVE."

A Weekly Magazine of Art, Philosophy, Science and Belles Lettres.

HAVE YOU A NASTY TASTE IN YOUR MOUTH ?

IT IS LIVER.

YOU NEED ONE TWENTY-THREE PILL.

(JUST ONE.)

NOT A DRUG BUT A LIVE AMERICAN REMEDY.

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THE BEST PILL IN THE WORLD FOR AN IRREGULAR LIVER.

I suppose it is some lingering traces of the Bladesover tradition in me that makes this combination of letters and pills seem so incongruous, just as I suppose it is a lingering trace of Plutarch and my ineradicable boyish imagination that at bottom our State should be wise, sane and dignified, that makes me think a country which leaves its medical and literary criticism, or indeed any such vitally important criticism, entirely to private enterprise and open to the advances of any purchaser, must be in a frankly hopeless condition. These are ideal conceptions of mine. As a matter of fact, nothing would be more entirely natural and representative of the relations of learning, thought and the economic situation in the world at the present time than this cover of the *Sacred Grove*—the quiet conversatism of the one element embedded in the aggressive brilliance of the other; the contrasted notes of bold physiological experiment and extreme mental immobility.

§ 6

There comes back, too, among these Hardingham memories, an impression of a drizzling November day, and how we looked out of the windows upon a procession of the London unemployed.

It was like looking down a well into some momentarily revealed nether world. Some thousands of needy ineffectual men had been raked together to trail their spiritless misery through the West End with an appeal that was also in its way a weak and unsubstantial threat: "It is Work we need, not Charity."

There they were, half-phantom through the fog, a silent, foot-dragging, interminable, grey procession. They carried wet, dirty banners, they rattled boxes for pence; these men who had not said "snap" in the right place, the men who had "snapped" too eagerly, the men who had never said "snap," the men who had never had a chance of saying "snap." A shambling, shameful stream they made, oozing along the street, the gutter waste of competitive civilisation. And we stood high out of it all, as high as if we looked godlike from another world, standing in a room beautifully lit and furnished, skilfully warmed, filled with costly things.

"There," thought I, "but for the grace of God, go George and Edward Ponderevo."

But my uncle's thoughts ran in a different channel, and he made that vision the text of a spirited but inconclusive harangue upon Tariff Reform.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

OUR PROGRESS FROM CAMDEN TOWN TO CREST HILL

§ 1

So far my history of my aunt and uncle has dealt chiefly with his industrial and financial exploits. But side by side with that history of inflation from the infinitesimal to the immense is another development, the change year by year from the shabby impecuniosity of the Camden Town lodging to the lavish munificence of the Crest Hill marble staircase and my aunt's golden bed, the bed that was facsimiled from Fontainebleau. And the odd thing is that as I come to this nearer part of my story I find it much more difficult to tell than the clear little perspective memories of the earlier days. Impressions crowd

upon one another and overlap one another ; I was presently to fall in love again, to be seized by a passion to which I still faintly respond, a passion that still clouds my mind. I came and went between Ealing and my aunt and uncle, and presently between Effie and clubland, and then between business and a life of research that became far more continuous, infinitely more consecutive and memorable than any of these other sets of experiences. I didn't witness a regular social progress therefore ; my aunt and uncle went up in the world so far as I was concerned as if they were displayed by an early cinematograph, with little jumps and flickers.

As I recall this side of our life, the figure of my round-eyed, button-nosed, pink-and-white Aunt Susan tends always to the central position. We drove the car and sustained the car, she sat in it with a magnificent variety of headgear poised upon her delicate neck, and—always with that faint ghost of a lisp no misspelling can render—commented on and illuminated the new aspects.

I've already sketched the little home behind the Wimblehurst chemist's shop, the lodging near the Cobden statue, and the apartments in Gower Street. Thence my aunt and uncle went into a flat in Redgauntlet Mansions. There they lived when I married. It was a compact flat, with very little for a woman to do in it. In those days my aunt, I think, used to find the time heavy upon her hands, and so she took to books and reading, and after a time even to going to lectures in the afternoon. I began to find unexpected books upon her table ; sociological books, travels, Shaw's plays.

" Hullo ! " I said, at the sight of some volume of the latter.

" I'm keeping a mind, George," she explained.

" Eh ? "

" Keeping a mind. Dogs I never cared for. It's been a toss-up between setting up a mind and setting up a soul. It's jolly lucky for Him and you it's a mind. I've joined the London Library, and I'm going in for the Royal Institution and every blessed lecture that comes along next winter. You'd better look out. . . ."

And I remember her coming in late one evening with a notebook in her hand.

" Where ye been, Susan ? " said my uncle.

" Birkbeck—Physiology. I'm getting on." She sat down and took off her gloves. " You're just glass to me," she sighed, and then in a note of grave reproach : " You old *Package !* I had no idea ! The Things you've kept from me ! . . ."

Presently they were setting up the house at Beckenham, and my aunt intermitted her intellectual activities. The house at Beckenham was something of an enterprise for them at that time, a reasonably large place by the standards of the early years of Tono-Bungay. It was a big, rather gaunt villa, with a conservatory and a shrubbery, a tennis-lawn, a quite considerable vegetable garden, and a small disused coach-house. I had some glimpses of the excitements of its inauguration, but not many because of the estrangement between my aunt and Marion.

My aunt went into that house with considerable zest, and my uncle distinguished himself by the thoroughness with which he did the repainting and replumbing. He had all the drains up and most of the garden with them, and stood administrative on heaps—administrating whiskey to the workmen. I found him there one day, most Napoleonic, on a little Elba of dirt, in an atmosphere that defies print. He also, I remember, chose what he considered cheerful contrasts of colours for the painting of the woodwork. This exasperated my aunt extremely—she called him a "Pestilential old Splosher" with an unusual note of earnestness—and he also enraged her into novelties of abuse by giving each bedroom the name of some favourite hero—Clive, Napoleon, Cæsar, and so forth—and having it painted on the door in gilt letters on a black label. "Martin Luther" was kept for me. Only her respect for domestic discipline, she said, prevented her retaliating with "Old Pondo" on the housemaid's cupboard.

Also he went and ordered one of the completest sets of garden requisites I have ever seen—and had them all painted a hard clear blue. My aunt got herself large tins of a kindlier-hued enamel and had everything secretly recoated, and this done, she found great joy in the garden and became an ardent rose-grower and herbaceous borderer, leaving her Mind, indeed, to damp evenings and the winter months. When I think of her at Beckenham, I always think first of her as dressed in that blue cotton stuff she affected, with her arms in huge gauntleted gardening gloves, a trowel in one hand and a small but no doubt hardy and promising annual, limp and very young-looking and sheepish, in the other.

Beckenham, in the persons of a vicar, a doctor's wife, and a large proud lady called Hogberry, "called" on my uncle and aunt almost at once, so soon in fact as the lawn was down again, and afterwards my aunt made friends with a quiet gentlewoman next door, *à propos* of an overhanging cherry-tree and the need of repairing the party fence. So she resumed her place in

society from which she had fallen with the disaster of Wimblehurst. She made a partially facetious study of the etiquette of her position, had cards engraved and retaliated calls. And then she received cards for one of Mrs. Hogberry's At Homes, gave an old garden party herself, participated in a bazaar and sale of work, and was really becoming quite cheerfully entangled in Beckenham society when she was suddenly taken up by the roots again by my uncle and transplanted to Chislehurst.

"Old Trek, George," she said compactly, "Onward and Up," when I found her superintending the loading of two big furniture vans. "Go up and say good-bye to 'Martin Luther,' and then I'll see what you can do to help me."

§ 2

I look into the jumbled stores of the middle distance of memory, and Beckenham seems to me a quite transitory phase. But really they were there several years; through nearly all my married life in fact, and far longer than the year and odd months we lived together at Wimblehurst. But the Wimblehurst time with them is fuller in my memory by far than the Beckenham period. There comes back to me with a quite considerable amount of detail the effect of that garden party of my aunt's and of a little social misbehaviour of which I was guilty on that occasion. It's like a scrap from another life. It's all set in what is for me a kind of cutaneous feeling, the feeling of rather ill-cut city clothes, frock-coat and grey trousers, and of a high collar and tie worn in sunshine among flowers. I have still a quite vivid memory of the little trapezoidal lawn, of the gathering and particularly of the hats and feathers of the gathering, of the parlour-maid and the blue tea-cups, and of the magnificent presence of Mrs. Hogberry and of her clear resonant voice. It was a voice that would have gone with a garden party on a larger scale; it went into adjacent premises; it included the gardener who was far up the vegetable patch and technically out of play. The only other men were my aunt's doctor, two of the clergy, amiable, contrasted men, and Mrs. Hogberry's imperfectly grown-up son, a youth just bursting into collar. The rest were women, except for a young girl or so in a state of speechless good behaviour. Marion also was there.

Marion and I had arrived a little estranged, and I remember her as a silent presence, a shadow across all that sunlit emptiness of intercourse. We had embittered each other with one of those miserable little disputes that seemed so unavoidable

between us. She had, with the help of Smithie, dressed rather elaborately for the occasion, and when she saw me prepared to accompany her in, I think it was a grey suit, she protested that silk hat and frock coat were imperative. I was recalcitrant, she quoted an illustrated paper showing a garden party with the King present, and finally I capitulated—but after my evil habit, resentfully. . . . Eh dear! those old quarrels, how pitiful they were, how trivial! And how sorrowful they are to recall! I think they grow more sorrowful as I grow older, and all the small passionate reasons for our mutual anger fade and fade out of memory.

The impression that Beckenham company has left on my mind is one of a modest unreality; they were all maintaining a front of unspecified social pretension, and evading the display of the economic facts of the case. Most of the husbands were "in business" off stage—it would have been outrageous to ask what the business was—and the wives were giving their energies to produce, with the assistance of novels and the illustrated magazines, a moralised version of the afternoon life of the aristocratic class. They hadn't the intellectual or moral enterprise of the upper-class woman, they had no political interests, they had no views about anything, and consequently they were, I remember, extremely difficult to talk to. They all sat about in the summer-house and in garden-chairs, and were very hatty and ruffly and sunshadey. Three ladies and the curate played croquet with a general immense gravity broken by occasional loud cries of feigned distress from the curate. "Oh! Whacking me about again! Augh!"

The dominant social fact that afternoon was Mrs. Hogberry; she took up a certain position commanding the croquet and went on, as my aunt said to me in an incidental aside, "like an old Roundabout." She talked of the way in which Beckenham society was getting mixed, and turned on to a touching letter she had recently received from her former nurse at Little Gossdean. Followed a loud account of Little Gossdean and how much she and her eight sisters had been looked up to there. "My poor mother was quite a little Queen there," she said. "And such *nice* Common People! People say the country labourers are getting disrespectful nowadays. It isn't so—not if they're properly treated. Here of course in Beckenham it's different. I don't call the people we get here a Poor—they're certainly not a proper Poor. They're Masses. I always tell Mr. Bugshoot they're Masses, and ought to be treated as such."

Dim memories of Mrs. Mackridge floated through my mind as I listened to her. . . .

I was whirled on this roundabout for a bit, and then had the fortune to fall off into a *tête-à-tête* with a lady whom my aunt introduced as Mrs. Mumble—but then she introduced everybody to me as Mumble that afternoon, either by way of humour or necessity.

That must have been one of my earliest essays in the art of polite conversation, and I remember that I began by criticising the local railway service, and that at the third sentence or thereabouts Mrs. Mumble said in a distinctly bright and encouraging way that she feared I was a very " frivolous " person.

I wonder now what it was I said that was " frivolous."

I don't know what happened to end that conversation, or if it had an end. I remember talking to one of the clergy for a time rather awkwardly, and being given a sort of topographical history of Beckenham, which he assured me time after time, was " Quite an old place. *Quite* an old place." As though I had treated it as new and he meant to be very patient but very convincing. Then we hung up in a distinct pause, and my aunt rescued me. " George," she said in a confidential undertone, " keep the pot a-boiling." And then audibly, " I say, will you both old trot about with tea a bit ? "

" Only too delighted to *trot* for you, Mrs. Ponderevo," said the clergyman, becoming fearfully expert and in his element ; " only too delighted."

I found we were near a rustic table, and that the housemaid was behind us in a suitable position to catch us on the rebound with the tea things.

" Trot ! " repeated the clergyman to me, much amused : " excellent expression ! " and I just saved him from the tray as he turned about.

We handed tea for a while. . . .

" Give 'em cakes," said my aunt, flushed but well in hand. " Helps 'em to talk, George. Always talk best after a little nushment. Like throwing a bit of turf down an old geyser."

She surveyed the gathering with a predominant blue eye and helped herself to tea.

" They keep on going stiff," she said in an undertone. . . . " I've done my best."

" It's been a huge success," I said encouragingly.

" That boy has had his legs crossed in that position and hasn't spoken for ten minutes. Stiffer and stiffer. Brittle.

He's beginning a dry cough—always a bad sign, George. . . . Walk 'em about, shall I ?—rub their noses with snow ? "

Happily she didn't. I got myself involved with the gentlewoman from next door, a pensive, languid-looking little woman with a low voice, and fell talking ; our topic, Cats and Dogs, and which it was we liked best.

" I always feel," said the pensive little woman, " that there's something about a dog—— A cat hasn't got it."

" Yes," I found myself admitting with great enthusiasm, " there *is* somethng. And yet again——"

" Oh ! I know there's something about a cat too. But it isn't the same."

" Not quite the same," I admitted ; " but still it's something."

" Ah ! But such a different something ! "

" More sinuous."

" Much more."

" Ever so much more. . . ."

" It makes all the difference, don't you think ? "

" Yes," I said, " *all.*"

She glanced at me gravely and sighed a long, deep-felt " *Yes.*"

A long pause.

The thing seemed to me to amount to a stalemate. Fear came into my heart and much perplexity.

" The—er, Roses," I said. I felt like a drowning man. " Those roses—don't you think they are—very beautiful flowers ? "

" Aren't they ! " she agreed gently. " There seems to be something in roses—something—I don't know how to express it."

" Something," I said helpfully.

" Yes," she said, " something. Isn't there ? "

" So few people see it," I said ; " more's the pity ! "

She sighed and said again very softly, " *Yes.* . . ."

There was another long pause. I looked at her and she was thinking dreamily. The drowning sensation returned, the fear and enfeeblement. I perceived by a sort of inspiration that her tea-cup was empty.

" Let me take your cup," I said abruptly, and, that secured, made for the table by the summer-house. I had no intention then of deserting my aunt. But close at hand the big French window of the drawing-room yawned inviting and suggestive. I can feel all that temptation now, and particularly the

provocation of my collar. In an instant I was lost. I would—— Just for a moment!

I dashed in, put down the cup on the keys of the grand piano and fled upstairs, softly, swiftly, three steps at a time, to the sanctuary of my uncle's study, his snuggery. I arrived there breathless, convinced there was no return for me. I was very glad and ashamed of myself and desperate. By means of a penknife I contrived to break open his cabinet of cigars, drew a chair to the window, took off my coat, collar and tie, and remained smoking guiltily and rebelliously, and peeping through the blind at the assembly on the lawn until it was altogether gone. . . .

The clergymen, I thought, were wonderful.

§ 3

A few such pictures of those small days at Beckenham stand out, and then I find myself among the Chislehurst memories. The Chislehust mansion had "grounds" rather than a mere garden, and there was a gardener's cottage and a little lodge at the gate. The ascendant movement was always far more in evidence there than at Beckenham. The velocity was increasing.

One night picks itself out as typical, as in its way marking an epoch. I was there, I think, about some advertisement stuff, on some sort of business anyhow, and my uncle and aunt had come back in a fly from a dinner at the Runcorns. (Even then he was nibbling at Runcorn with the idea of our great Amalgamation budding in his mind.) I got down there, I suppose, about eleven. I found the two of them sitting in the study, my aunt on a chair-arm with a whimsical pensiveness on her face, regarding my uncle, and he, much extended and very rotund, in the low arm-chair drawn up to the fender.

"Look here, George," said my uncle, after my first greetings, "I just been saying; We aren't Oh Fay!"

"Eh?"

"Not Oh Fay! Socially!"

"Old *Fly*, he means, George—French!"

"Oh! Didn't think of French. One never knows where to have him. What's gone wrong to-night?"

"I been thinking. It isn't any particular thing. I ate too much of that fishy stuff at first, like salt frog-spawn, and was a bit confused by olives; and—well, I didn't know which wine was which. Had to say *that* each time. It puts your talk all

wrong. And she wasn't in evening dress, not like the others. We can't go on in that style, George—not a proper ad."

"I'm not sure you were right," I said, "in having a fly."

"We got to do it all better," said my uncle, "we got to do it in Style. Smart business, smart men. She tries to pass it off as humorous"—my aunt pulled a grimace—"it isn't humorous! See? We're on the up-grade now, fair and square. We're going to be big. We aren't going to be laughed at as Poovenoos, see?"

"Nobody laughed at you," said my aunt. "Old Bladder!"

"Nobody isn't going to laugh at me," said my uncle, glancing at his contours and suddenly sitting up.

My aunt raised her eyebrows slightly, swung her foot, and said nothing.

"We aren't keeping pace with our own progress, George. We got to. We're bumping against new people, and they set up to be gentlefolks—etiquette dinners and all the rest of it. They give themselves airs and expect us to be fish-out-of-water. We aren't going to be. They think we've no Style. Well, we give them Style for our advertisements, and we're going to give 'em Style all through. . . . You needn't be born to it to dance well on the wires of the Bond Street tradesmen. See?"

I handed him the cigar-box.

"Runcorn hadn't cigars like these," he said, truncating one lovingly. "We beat him at cigars. We'll beat him all round."

My aunt and I regarded him, full of apprehensions.

"I got idees," he said darkly to the cigar, deepening our dread.

He pocketed his cigar-cutter and spoke again.

"We got to learn all the rotten little game first. See? F'rinstance, we got to get samples of all the blessed wines there are—and learn 'em up. Stern, Smoor, Burgundy, all of 'em. She took Stern to-night—and when she tasted it first—— You pulled a face, Susan, you did. I saw you. It surprised you. You bunched your nose. We got to get used to wine and not do that. We got to get used to wearing evening dress—*you*, Susan, too."

"Always have had a tendency to stick out of my clothes," said my aunt. "However—— Who cares?" She shrugged her shoulders.

I had never seen my uncle so immensely serious.

"Got to get the hang of etiquette," he went on to the fire. "Horses even. Practise everything. Dine every night in evening dress. . . . Get a brougham or something. Learn up

golf and tennis and things. Country gentlemen. Oh Fay. It isn't only freedom from Goochery."

"Eh?" I said.

"Oh!—Gawshery, if you like!"

"French, George," said my aunt. "But *I'm* not old Gooch. I made that face for fun."

"It isn't only freedom from Gawshery. We got to have Style. See? Style! Just all right and one better. That's what I call Style. We can do it and we will."

He mumbled his cigar and smoked for a space, leaning forward and looking into the fire.

"What is it," he asked, "after all? What is it? Tips about eating; tips about drinking. Clothes. How to hold yourself, and not say jes' the few little things they know for certain are wrong—jes' the shibboleth things. . . ."

He was silent again, and the cigar crept up from the horizontal towards the zenith as the confidence of his mouth increased.

"Learn the whole bag of tricks in six months," he said, becoming more cheerful. "Eh, Susan? Beat 'em out! George, you in particular ought to get hold of it. Ought to get into a good club, and all that."

"Always ready to learn," I said. "Ever since you gave me the chance of Latin. So far we don't seem to have hit upon any Latin-speaking stratum in the population."

"We've come to French," said my aunt, "anyhow."

"It's a very useful language," said my uncle. "Puts a point on things. Zzzz. As for accent, no Englishman has an accent. No Englishman pronounces French properly. Don't you tell *me*. It's a Bluff. It's all a Bluff. Life's a Bluff—practically. That's why it's so important, Susan, for us to attend to Style. Le Steel Say Lum. The Style it's the man. Whad you laughing at, Susan? . . . George, you're not smoking. These cigars are good for the mind. . . . What do *you* think of it all? We got to adapt ourselves. We have—so far. . . . Not going to be beat by these silly things."

§ 4

"What do you think of it, George?" he insisted.

What I said I thought of it I don't now recall. Only I have very distinctly the impression of meeting for a moment my aunt's impenetrable eye. And anyhow he started in with his accustomed energy to rape the mysteries of the Costly Life,

and become the calmest of its lords. On the whole I think he did it—thoroughly. I have crowded memories, a little difficult to disentangle, of his experimental stages, his experimental proceedings. It's hard at times to say which memory comes in front of which. I recall him as presenting on the whole a series of small surprises, as being again and again, unexpectedly, a little more self-confident, a little more polished, a little richer and finer, a little more aware of the positions and values of things and men. There was a time—it must have been very early—when I saw him deeply impressed by the splendours of the dining-room of the National Liberal Club. Heaven knows who our host was or what that particular little "feed" was about now!—all that sticks is the impression of our straggling entry, a string of six or seven guests, and my uncle looking about him at the numerous bright red-shaded tables, at the exotics in great Majolica jars, at the shining ceramic columns and pilasters, at the impressive portraits of Liberal statesmen and heroes, and all that contributes to the *ensemble* of that palatial spectacle. He was betrayed into a whisper to me, "This is all Right, George!" he said. That artless comment seems almost incredible as I set it down: there came a time so speedily when not even the clubs of New York could have overawed my uncle, and when he could walk through the bowing magnificence of the Royal Grand Hotel to his chosen table in that aggressively exquisite gallery upon the river, with all the easy calm of one of earth's legitimate kings.

The two of them learnt the new game rapidly and well; they experimented abroad, they experimented at home. At Chislehurst, with the aid of a new, very costly, but highly instructive cook, they tried over everything they heard of that roused their curiosity and had any reputation for difficulty, from asparagus to plover's eggs. They afterwards got a gardener who could wait at table—and he brought the soil home to one. Then there came a butler.

I remember my aunt's first dinner-gown very brightly, and how she stood before the fire in the drawing-room confessing once unsuspected pretty arms with all the courage she possessed, and looking over her shoulder at herself in a mirror.

"A ham," she remarked reflectively, "must feel like this. Just a necklace. . . ."

I attempted, I think, some commonplace compliment.

My uncle appeared at the door in a white waistcoat and with his hands in his trouser pockets; he halted and surveyed her critically.

"Couldn't tell you from a duchess, Susan," he remarked. "I'd like to have you painted, standin' at the fire like that. Sargent! You look—spirited, somehow. Lord!—I wish some of those damned tradesmen at Wimblehurst could see you. . . ."

They did a lot of week-ending at hotels, and sometimes I went down with them. We seemed to fall into a vast drifting crowd of social learners. I don't know whether it is due simpl to my changed circumstances, but it seems to me there have been immensely disproportionate developments of the hotel-frequenting and restaurant-using population during the last twenty years. It is not only, I think, that there are crowds of people who, like we were, are in the economically ascendant phase, but whole masses of the prosperous section of the population must be altering their habits, giving up high-tea for dinner and taking to evening dress, using the week-end hotels as a practice-ground for these new social arts. A swift and systematic conversion to gentility has been going on, I am convinced, throughout the whole commercial upper-middle class since I was twenty-one. Curiously mixed was the personal quality of the people one saw in these raids. There were conscientiously refined and low-voiced people reeking with proud bashfulness, there were aggressively smart people using pet diminutives for each other loudly and seeking fresh occasions for brilliant rudeness; there were awkward husbands and wives quarrelling furtively about their manners and ill at ease under the eye of the waiter, cheerfully amiable and often discrepant couples with a disposition to inconspicuous corners, and the jolly sort, affecting an unaffected ease, plump happy ladies who laughed too loud, and gentlemen in evening dress who subsequently "got their pipes." And nobody, you knew, was anybody, however expensively they dressed and whatever rooms they took.

I look back now with a curious remoteness of spirit to those crowded dining-rooms with their dispersed tables and their inevitable red-shaded lights and the unsympathetic, unskilful waiters, and the choice of "Thig or Glear, Sir?" I've not dined in that way, in that sort of place, now for five years—it must be quite five years, so specialised and narrow is my life becoming.

My uncle's earlier motor-car phases work in with these associations, and there stands out a little bright vignette of the hall of the Magnificent, Bexhill-on-Sea, and people dressed for dinner and sitting about amidst the scarlet furniture-satin and white enamelled woodwork until the gong should gather them; and my aunt is there, very marvellously wrapped about in a dust

cloak and a cage-like veil, and there are hotel porters and under-porters very alert, and an obsequious manager, and the tall young lady in black from the office is surprised into admiration, and in the middle of the picture is my uncle making his first appearance in that Esquimaux costume I have already mentioned, a short figure, compactly immense, hugely goggled, wearing a sort of brown rubber proboscis, and surmounted by a table-land of motoring cap.

§ 5

So it was we recognised our new needs as fresh invaders of the upper levels of the social system, and set ourselves quite consciously to the acquisition of Style and *Savoir Faire.* We became part of what is nowadays quite an important element in the confusion of our world, that multitude of economically ascendant people who are learning how to spend money. It is made up of financial people, the owners of the businesses that are eating up their competitors, inventors of new sources of wealth such as ourselves; it includes nearly all America as one sees it on the European stage. It is a various multitude having only this in common: they are all moving, and particularly their womenkind are moving, from conditions in which means were insistently finite, Things were few and customs simple, towards a limitless expenditure and the sphere of attraction of Bond Street, Fifth Avenue, and Paris. Their general effect is one of progressive revelation, of limitless rope.

They discover suddenly indulgences their moral code never foresaw and has no provision for, elaborations, ornaments, possessions beyond their wildest dreams. With an immense astonished zest they begin *shopping*, begin a systematic adaptation to a new life crowded and brilliant with things shopped, with jewels, maids, butlers, coachmen, electric broughams, hired town and country houses. They plunge into it as one plunges into a career; as a class, they talk, think, and dream possessions. Their literature, their Press, turns all on that; immense illustrated weeklies of unsurpassed magnificence guide them in domestic architecture, in the art of owning a garden, in the achievement of the sumptuous in motor-cars, in an elaborate sporting equipment, in the purchase and control of their estates, in travel and stupendous hotels. Once they begin to move they go far and fast. Acquisition becomes the substance of their lives. They find a world organised to gratify that passion. In a brief year or so they are connoisseurs. They join in the

plunder of the eighteenth century, buy rare old books, fine old pictures, good old furniture. Their first crude conception of dazzling suites of the newly perfect is replaced almost from the outset by a jackdaw dream of accumulating costly discrepant old things. . . .

I seem to remember my uncle taking to shopping quite suddenly. In the Beckenham days and in the early Chislehurst days he was chiefly interested in getting money, and except for his onslaught on the Beckenham house, bothered very little about his personal surroundings and possessions. I forget now when the change came and he began to spend. Some accident must have revealed to him this new source of power, or some subtle shifting occurred in the tissues of his brain. He began to spend and "shop." So soon as he began to shop, he began to shop violently. He began buying pictures, and then, oddly enough, old clocks. For the Chislehurst house he bought nearly a dozen grandfather clocks and three copper warming-pans. After that he bought much furniture. Then he plunged into art patronage, and began to commission pictures and to make presents to churches and institutions. His buying increased with a regular acceleration. Its development was a part of the mental changes that came to him in the wild excitements of the last four years of his ascent. Towards the climax he was a furious spender; he shopped with large unexpected purchases, he shopped like a mind seeking expression, he shopped to astonish and dismay; shopped *crescendo*, shopped *fortissimo*, *con molto expressione* until the magnificent smash of Crest Hill ended his shopping for ever. Always it was he who shopped. My aunt did not shine as a purchaser. It is a curious thing, due to I know not what fine strain in her composition, that my aunt never set any great store upon possessions. She plunged through that crowded bazaar of Vanity Fair during those feverish years, spending no doubt freely and largely, but spending with detachment and a touch of humorous contempt for the things, even the "old" things, that money can buy. It came to me suddenly one afternoon just how detached she was, as I saw her going towards the Hardingham, sitting up as she always did rather stiffly in her electric brougham, regarding the glittering world with interested and ironically innocent blue eyes from under the brim of a hat that defied comment. "No one," I thought, "would sit so apart if she hadn't dreams—and what are her dreams?"

I'd never thought.

And I remember too, an outburst of scornful description

after she had lunched with a party of women at the Imperial Cosmic Club. She came round to my rooms on the chance of finding me there, and I gave her tea. She professed herself tired and cross, and flung herself into my chair. . . .

"George," she cried, "the Things women are! Do *I* stink of money?"

"Lunching?" I asked.

She nodded.

"Plutocratic ladies?"

"Yes."

"Oriental type?"

"Oh! Like a burst hareem! . . . Bragging of possessions. . . . They feel you. They feel your clothes, George, to see if they are good!"

I soothed her as well as I could. "They *are* Good, aren't they?" I said.

"It's the old pawnshop in their blood," she said, drinking tea; and then in infinite disgust, "They run their hands over your clothes—they paw you."

I had a moment of doubt whether perhaps she had not been discovered in possession of unsuspected forgeries. I don't know. After that my eyes were quickened, and I began to see for myself women running their hands over other women's furs, scrutinising their lace, even demanding to handle jewellery, appraising, envying, testing. They have a kind of etiquette. The woman who feels says, "What beautiful sables?" "What lovely lace?" The woman felt admits proudly, "It's Real, you know," or disavows pretension modestly and hastily, "It's not Good." In each other's houses they peer at the pictures, handle the selvage of hangings, look at the bottoms of china. . . .

I wonder if it *is* the old pawnshop in the blood.

I doubt if Lady Drew and the Olympians did that sort of thing, but there I may be only clinging to another of my former illusions about aristocracy and the State. Perhaps always possessions have been Booty, and never anywhere has there been such a thing as house and furnishings native and natural to the women and men who made use of them. . . .

§ 6

For me, at least, it marked an epoch in my uncle's career when I learnt one day that he had "shopped" Lady Grove. I realised a fresh, wide, unpreluded step. He took me by

surprise with the sudden change of scale from such portable possessions as jewels and motor-cars to a stretch of countryside. The transaction was Napoleonic; he was told of the place; he said "snap"; there were no preliminary desirings or searchings. Then he came home and said what he had done. Even my aunt was for a day or so measurably awe-stricken by this exploit in purchase, and we both went down with him to see the house in a mood near consternation. It struck us then as a very lordly place indeed. I remember the three of us standing on the terrace that looked westward, surveying the sky-reflecting windows of the house, and a feeling of unwarrantable intrusion comes back to me.

Lady Grove, you know, is a very beautiful house indeed, a still and gracious place, whose age-long seclusion was only effectively broken with the toot of the coming of the motor-car. An old Catholic family had died out in it, century by century, and was now altogether dead. Portions of the fabric are thirteenth century, and its last architectural revision was Tudor; within, it is for the most part dark and chilly, save for two or three favoured rooms and its tall-windowed, oak-galleried hall. Its terrace is its noblest feature, a very wide broad lawn it is, bordered by a low stone battlement, and there is a great cedar in one corner under whose level branches one looks out across the blue distances of the Weald, blue distances that are made extraordinarily Italian in quality by virtue of the dark masses of that single tree. It is a very high terrace; southward one looks down upon the tops of wayfaring trees and spruces, and westward on a steep slope of beechwood, through which the road comes. One turns back to the still old house, and sees a grey and lichenous façade with a very finely arched entrance. It was warmed by the afternoon light and touched with the colour of a few neglected roses and a pyracanthus. It seemed to me that the most modern owner conceivable in this serene fine place was some bearded scholarly man in a black cassock, gentle-voiced and white-handed, or some very soft-robed, grey gentlewoman. And there was my uncle holding his goggles in a sealskin glove, wiping the glass with a pocket-handkerchief, and asking my aunt if Lady Grove wasn't a "Bit of all Right."

My aunt made him no answer.

"The man who built this," I speculated, "wore armour and carried a sword."

"There's some of it inside still," said my uncle.

We went inside. An old woman with very white hair was in charge of the place and cringed rather obviously to the new

master. She evidently found him a very strange and frightful apparition indeed, and was dreadfully afraid of him. But if the surviving present bowed down to us, the past did not. We stood up to the dark long portraits of the extinguished race—one was a Holbein—and looked them in their sidelong eyes. They looked back at us. We all, I know, felt the enigmatical quality in them. Even my uncle was momentarily embarrassed, I think, by that invincibly self-complacent expression. It was just as though, after all, he had *not* bought them up and replaced them altogether, as though that, secretly, they knew better and could smile at him. . . .

The spirit of the place was akin to Bladesover but touched with something older and remoter. That armour that stood about had once served in tilt-yards, if indeed it had not served in battle, and this family had sent its blood and treasure, time after time, upon the most romantic quest in history, to Palestine. Dreams, loyalties, place and honour, how utterly had it all evaporated, leaving at last, the final expression of its spirit, these quaint painted smiles, these smiles of triumphant completion. It had evaporated, indeed, long before the ultimate Durgan had died, and in his old age he had cumbered the place with Early Victorian cushions and carpets and tapestry tablecloths and invalid appliances of a type even more extinct it seemed to us than the crusades. . . . Yes, it was different from Bladesover.

"Bit stuffy, George," said my uncle. "They hadn't much idee of ventilation when this was built."

One of the panelled rooms was half-filled with presses and a four-poster bed. "Might be the ghost-room," said my uncle; but it did not seem to me that so retiring a family as the Durgans, so old and completed and exhausted a family as the Durgans, was likely to haunt anybody. What living thing now had any concern with their honour and judgments and good and evil deeds? Ghosts and witchcraft were a later innovation, that fashion came from Scotland with the Stuarts. . . .

Afterwards, prying for epitaphs, we found a marble crusader with a broken nose, under a battered canopy of fretted stone, outside the restricted limits of the present Duffield church, and half-buried in nettles. "Ichabod," said my uncle. "Eh? We shall be like that, Susan, some day. . . . I'm going to clean him up a bit and put a railing to keep off the children."

"Old saved at the eleventh hour," said my aunt, quoting one of the less successful advertisements of Tono-Bungay.

But I don't think my uncle heard her.

It was by our captured crusader that the vicar found us. He came round the corner at us briskly, a little out of breath. He had an air of having been running after us since the first toot of our horn had warned the village of our presence. He was an Oxford man, clean-shaven, with a cadaverous complexion and a guardedly respectful manner, a cultivated intonation, and a general air of accommodation to the new order of things. These Oxford men are the Greeks of our plutocratic empire. He was a Tory in spirit, and what one may call an adapted Tory by stress of circumstances, that is to say, he was no longer a legitimist, he was prepared for the substitution of new lords for old. We were pill-vendors, he knew, and no doubt horribly vulgar in soul; but then it might have been some polygamous Indian rajah, a great strain on a good man's tact, or some Jew with an inherited expression of contempt. Anyhow, we were English and neither Dissenters nor Socialists, and he was cheerfully prepared to do what he could to make gentlemen of both of us. He might have preferred Americans for some reasons; they are not so obviously taken from one part of the social system and dumped down in another, and they are more teachable; but in this world we cannot always be choosers. So he was very bright and pleasant with us, showed us the church, gossiped informingly about our neighbours on the countryside, Tux the banker, Lord Boom the magazine and newspaper proprietor, Lord Carnaby, that great sportsman, and old Lady Osprey. And finally he took us by way of a village lane—three children bobbed convulsively with eyes of terror for my uncle—through a meticulous garden to a big slovenly Vicarage with faded Victorian furniture and a faded Victorian wife, who gave us tea and introduced us to a confusing family dispersed among a lot of disintegrating basket-chairs upon the edge of a well-used tennis-lawn.

These people interested me. They were a common type, no doubt, but they were new to me. There were two lank sons who had been playing singles at tennis, red-eared youths growing black moustaches, and dressed in conscientiously untidy tweeds and unbuttoned and ungirt Norfolk jackets. There were a number of ill-nourished-looking daughters, sensible and economical in their costume, the younger still with long, brown-stockinged legs, and the eldest present—there were, we discovered, one or two hidden away—displaying a large gold cross and other aggressive ecclesiastical symbols; there were two or three fox-terriers, a retrieverish mongrel, and an old, bloody-eyed and very evil-smelling St. Bernard. There was a jackdaw. There was,

moreover, an ambiguous silent lady that my aunt subsequently decided must be a very deaf paying guest. Two or three people had concealed themselves at our coming and left unfinished teas behind them. Rugs and cushions lay among the chairs and two of the latter were, I noted, covered with Union Jacks.

The vicar introduced us sketchily, and the faded Victorian wife regarded my aunt with a mixture of conventional scorn and abject respect and talked to her in a languid persistent voice about people in the neighbourhood whom my aunt could not possibly know. My aunt received these personalia cheerfully, with her blue eyes flitting from point to point, and coming back again and again to the pinched faces of the daughters and the cross upon the eldest's breast. Encouraged by my aunt's manner the vicar's wife grew patronising and kindly, and made it evident that she could do much to bridge the social gulf between ourselves and the people of family about us.

I had just snatches of that conversation. "Mrs. Merridew brought him quite a lot of money. Her father, I believe, had been in the Spanish wine trade—quite a lady though. And after that he fell off his horse and cracked his brain-pan and took to fishing and farming. I'm sure you'll like to know them. He's *most* amusing. . . . The daughter had a disappointment and went to China as a missionary and got mixed up in a massacre. . . ."

"The most beautiful silks and things she brought back, you'd hardly believe! . . ."

"Yes, they gave them to propitiate her. You see they didn't understand the difference, and they thought that as they'd been massacring people, *they'd* be massacred. They didn't understand the difference Christianity makes. . . ."

"Seven bishops they've had in the family! . . ."

"Married a Papist and was quite lost to them. . . ."

"He failed for some dreadful examination and had to go into the militia. . . ."

"So she bit his leg as hard as ever she could and he let go. . . ."

"Had four of his ribs amputated. . . ."

"Caught meningitis and was carried off in a week. . . ."

"Had to have a large piece of silver tube let into his throat, and if he wants to talk he puts his finger on it. It makes him so interesting, I think. You feel he's sincere somehow. A most charming man in every way. . . ."

"Preserved them both in spirits very luckily, and there they

are in his study, though of course he doesn't show them to everybody. . . . "

The silent lady, unperturbed by these apparently exciting topics, scrutinised my aunt's costume with a singular intensity, and was visibly moved when she unbuttoned her dust-cloak and flung it wide. Meanwhile, we men conversed, one of the more spirited daughters listened brightly, and the youths lay on the grass at our feet. My uncle offered them cigars, but they both declined—out of bashfulness it seemed to me, whereas the vicar, I think, accepted out of tact. When we were not looking at them directly, these young men would kick each other furtively.

Under the influence of my uncle's cigar, the vicar's mind had soared beyond the limits of the district. "This Socialism," he said, "seems making great headway."

My uncle shook his head. "We're too individualistic in this country for that sort of nonsense," he said. "Everybody's business is nobody's business. That's where they go wrong."

"They have some intelligent people in their ranks, I am told," said the vicar, "writers and so forth. Quite a distinguished playwright, my eldest daughter was telling me—I forget his name. Milly dear! Oh! she's not here. Painters too, they have. This Socialism, it seems to me, is part of the Unrest of the Age. . . . But, as you say, the spirit of the people is against it. In the country at any rate. The people down here are too sturdily independent in their small way—and too sensible altogether. . . ."

"It's a great thing for Duffield to have Lady Grove occupied again," he was saying when my wandering attention came back from some attractive casualty in his wife's discourse. "People have always looked up to the house—and considering all things, old Mr. Durgan really was extraordinarily good—extraordinarily good. You intend to give us a good deal of your time here I hope."

"I mean to do my duty by the Parish," said my uncle.

"I'm sincerely glad to hear it—sincerely. We've missed the house influence. An English village isn't complete—— People get out of hand. Life grows dull. The young people drift away to London."

He enjoyed his cigar gingerly for a moment.

"We shall look to you to liven things up," he said—poor man!

My uncle cocked his cigar and removed it from his mouth.

"Whad you think the place wants?" he asked.

He did not wait for an answer. "I been thinking while you been talking—things one might do. Cricket—a good English game—sports. Build the chaps a pavilion perhaps. Then every village ought to have a miniature rifle range."

"Ye-ees," said the vicar. "Provided, of course, there isn't a constant popping. . . ."

"Manage *that* all right," said my uncle. "Thing'd be a sort of long shed. Paint it red. British colour. Then there's a Union Jack for the church and the village school. Paint the school red too, p'raps. Not enough colour about now. Too grey. Then a maypole."

"How far our people would take up that sort of thing——" began the vicar.

"I'm all for getting that good old English spirit back again," said my uncle. "Merrymakings. Lads and lasses dancing on the village green. Harvest home. Fairings. Yule Log—all the rest of it."

"How would old Sally Glue do for a May Queen?" asked one of the sons in the slight pause that followed.

"Or Annie Glassbound?" said the other, with the huge virile guffaw of a young man whose voice has only recently broken.

"Sally Glue is eighty-five," explained the vicar, "and Annie Glassbound is—well—a young lady of extremely generous proportions. And not quite right, you know. Not quite right—here." He tapped his brow.

"Generous proportions!" said the eldest son, and the guffaws were renewed.

"You see," said the vicar, "all the brisker girls go into service in or near London. The life of excitement attracts them. And no doubt the higher wages have something to do with it. And the liberty to wear finery. And generally—freedom from restraint. So that there might be a little difficulty perhaps to find a May Queen here just at present who was really young and, er—pretty. . . . Of course I couldn't think of any of my girls—or anything of that sort."

"Me got to attract 'em back," said my uncle. "That's what I feel about it. We got to Buck-Up the country. The English country is a going concern still; just as the Established Church—if you'll excuse me saying it, is a going concern. Just as Oxford is—or Cambridge. Or any of those old, fine old things. Only it wants fresh capital, fresh idees and fresh methods. Light railways, F'rinstance—scientific use of drainage. Wire fencing—machinery—all that."

The vicar's face for one moment betrayed dismay. Perhaps he was thinking of his country walks amidst the hawthorns and honeysuckle.

"There's great things," said my uncle, "to be done on Mod'un lines with Village Jam and Pickles—boiled in the country."

It was the reverberation of this last sentence in my mind, I think, that sharpened my sentimental sympathy as we went through the straggling village street and across the trim green on our way back to London. It seemed that afternoon the most tranquil and idyllic collection of creeper-sheltered homes you can imagine; thatch still lingered on a whitewashed cottage or two, pyracanthus, wallflowers and daffodils abounded, and an unsystematic orchard or so was white with blossom above and gay with bulbs below. I noted a row of straw beehives, beehive shaped, beehives of the type long since condemned as inefficient by all progressive minds, and in the doctor's acre of grass a flock of two whole sheep was grazing—no doubt he'd taken them on account. Two men and one old woman made gestures of abject vassalage, and my uncle replied with a lordly gesture of his great motoring glove. . . .

"England's full of Bits like this," said my uncle, leaning over the front seat and looking back with great satisfaction. The black glare of his goggles rested for a time on the receding turrets of Lady Grove just peeping over the trees.

"I shall have a flagstaff, I think," he considered. "Then one could show when one is in residence. The villagers will like to know. . . ."

I reflected. "They will," I said. "They're used to liking to know. . . ."

My aunt had been unusually silent. Suddenly she spoke. "He says Snap," she remarked; "he buys that place. And a nice old job of Housekeeping he gives me! He sails through the village swelling like an old Turkey. And who'll have to scoot the butler? Me! Who's got to forget all she ever knew and start again? Me! Who's got to trek from Chislehurst and be a great lady? Me. . . . You old Bother! Just when I was settling down and beginning to feel at home."

My uncle turned his goggles to her. "Ah *this* time it is home, Susan. . . . We got there."

§ 7

It seems to me now but a step from the buying of Lady Grove to the beginning of Crest Hill, from the days when the former was a stupendous achievement to the days when it was too small and dark and inconvenient altogether for a great financier's use. For me that was a period of increasing detachment from our business and the great world of London, I saw it more and more in broken glimpses and sometimes I was working in my little pavilion above Lady Grove for a fortnight together; even when I came up it was often solely for a meeting of the aeronautical society or for one of the learned societies or to consult literature or employ searchers or some such special business. For my uncle it was a period of stupendous inflation. Each time I met him I found him more confident, more comprehensive, more consciously a factor in great affairs. Soon he was no longer an associate of merely business men, he was big enough for the attentions of greater powers.

I grew used to dicovering some item of personal news about him in my evening paper or to the sight of a full-page portrait of him in a sixpenny magazine. Usually the news was of some munificent act, some romantic piece of buying or giving or some fresh rumour of reconstruction. He saved, you will remember, the Parbury Reynolds for the country. Or at times it would be an interview or my uncle's contribution to some symposium of the "Secret of Success," or such-like topic. Or wonderful tales of his power of work, of his wonderful organisation to get things done, of his instant decisions and remarkable power of judging his fellow men. They repeated his great *mot:* "Eight-hour working-day—I want eighty hours!"

He became modestly but resolutely "public." They cartooned him in *Vanity Fair.* One year my aunt, looking indeed a very gracious, slender lady, faced the portrait of the King in the great room at Burlington House, and the next year saw a medallion of my uncle by Ewart, looking out upon the world, proud and imperial, but on the whole a trifle too prominently convex, from the walls of the New Gallery.

I shared only intermittently in his social experiences. People knew of me it is true, and many of them sought to make through me a sort of flank attack upon him, and there was a legend, owing, very unreasonably, partly to my growing scientific reputation and partly to an element of reserve in my manner, that I played a much larger share in planning his operations than was actually the case. This led to one or two very intimate

private dinners, to my inclusion in one or two house parties and various odd offers of introductions and services that I didn't for the most part accept. Among other people who sought me in this way was Archie Garvell, now a smart, impecunious soldier of no particular distinction, who would, I think, have been quite prepared to develop any sporting instincts I possessed, and who was beautifully unaware of our former contact. He was always offering me winners; no doubt in a spirit of anticipatory exchange for some really good thing in our more scientific and certain method of getting something for nothing. . . .

In spite of my pre-occupation with my experimental work, I did, I find now that I come to ransack my impressions, see a great deal of the great world during those eventful years; I had a near view of the machinery by which our astounding Empire is run, rubbed shoulders and exchanged experiences with bishops and statesmen, political women and women who were not political, physicians and soldiers, artists and authors, the directors of great journals, philanthropists and all sort of eminent, significant people. I saw the statesmen without their orders and the bishops with but a little purple silk left over from their canonicals, inhaling, not incense but cigar smoke. I could look at them all the better because for the most part they were not looking at me but at my uncle, and calculating consciously or unconsciously how they might use him and assimilate him to their system, the most unpremeditated, subtle, successful and aimless plutocracy that ever encumbered the destinies of mankind. Not one of them, so far as I could see, until disaster overtook him, resented his lies, his almost naked dishonesty of method, the disorderly disturbance of this trade and that, caused by his spasmodic operations. I can see them now about him, see them polite, watchful, various; his stiff compact little figure always a centre of attention, his wiry hair, his brief nose, his under-lip, electric with self-confidence. Wandering marginally through distinguished gatherings, I would catch the whispers: "That's Mr. Ponderevo!"

"The little man."

"Yes, the little bounder with the glasses."

"They say he's made——"

Or I would see him on some *parterre* of a platform beside my aunt's hurraying hat, amidst titles and costumes, "holding his end up," as he would say, subscribing heavily to obvious charities, even at times making brief convulsive speeches in some good cause before the most exalted audiences. "Mr. Chairman, your Royal Highness, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen," he

would begin amidst subsiding applause and adjust those obstinate glasses and thrust back the wings of his frock-coat and rest his hands upon his hips and speak his fragment with ever and again an incidental Zzzz. His hands would fret about him as he spoke, fiddle his glasses, feel in his waistcoat pockets ; ever and again he would rise slowly to his toes as a sentence unwound jerkily like a clockwork snake, and drop back on his heels at the end. They were the very gestures of our first encounter when he had stood before the empty fireplace in his minute draped parlour and talked of my future to my mother.

In those measurelessly long hot afternoons in the little shop at Wimblehurst he had talked and dreamt of the Romance of Modern Commerce. Here surely was his romance come true.

§ 8

People say that my uncle lost his head at the crest of his fortunes, but if one may tell so much truth of a man one has in a manner loved, he never had very much head to lose. He was always imaginative, erratic, inconsistent, recklessly inexact, and his inundation of wealth merely gave him scope for these qualities. It is true indeed that towards the climax he became intensely irritable at times and impatient of contradiction, but that, I think, was rather the gnawing uneasiness of sanity than any mental disturbance. But I find it hard either to judge him or convey the full development of him to the reader. I saw too much of him ; my memory is choked with disarranged moods and aspects. How he is distended with megalomania, now he is deflated, now he is quarrelsome, now impenetrably self-satisfied, but always he is sudden, jerky, fragmentary, energetic, and—in some subtle fundamental way that I find difficult to define—absurd.

There stands out—because of the tranquil beauty of its setting perhaps—a talk we had in the verandah of the little pavilion near my work-sheds behind Crest Hill in which my aeroplanes and navigable balloons were housed. It was one of many similar conversations, and I do not know why it in particular should survive its fellows. It happens so. He had come up to me after his coffee to consult me about a certain chalice which in a moment of splendour and under the importunity of a countess he had determined to give to a deserving church in the East End. I in a moment of even rasher generosity had suggested Ewart as a possible artist. Ewart had produced at once an admirable sketch for the sacred vessel surrounded by a sort of

wreath of Millies with open arms and wings and had drawn fifty pounds on the strength of it. After that came a series of vexatious delays. The chalice became less and less of a commercial-man's chalice, acquired more and more the elusive quality of the Holy Grail and at last even the drawing receded.

My uncle grew restive. . . . "You see, George, they'll begin to want the blasted thing!"

"What blasted thing?"

"That chalice, damn it! They're beginning to ask questions. It isn't Business, George."

"It's art," I protested, "and religion."

"That's all very well. But it's not a good ad. for us, George, to make a promise and not deliver the goods. . . . I'll have to write off your friend Ewart as a bad debt, that's what it comes to, and go to a decent firm. . . ."

We sat outside on deck-chairs in the verandah of the pavilion, smoked, drank whiskey, and the chalice disposed of, meditated. His temporary annoyance passed. It was an altogether splendid summer night, following a blazing, indolent day. Full moonlight brought out dimly the lines of the receding hills, one wave beyond another; far beyond were the pin-point lights of Leatherhead, and in the foreground the little stage from which I used to start upon my gliders gleamed like wet steel. The season must have been high June, for down in the woods that hid the lights of the Lady Grove windows, I remember the nightingales trilled and gurgled. . . .

"We got here, George," said my uncle ending a long pause. "Didn't I say?"

"Say!—when?" I asked.

"In that hole in the To'nem Court Road, eh? It's been a Straight Square fight, and here we are!"

I nodded.

"'Member me telling you—Tono-Bungay? . . . Well. . . . I'd just that afternoon thought of it!"

"I've fancied at times——" I admitted.

"It's a great world, George, nowadays, with a fair chance for every one who lays hold of things. The career *ouvert* to the Talons—eh? Tono-Bungay. Think of it! It's a great world and a growing world, and I'm glad we're in it—and getting a pull. We're getting big people, George. Things come to us. Eh? This Palestine thing. . . ."

He meditated for a time and Zzzzed softly. Then he became still.

His theme was taken up by a cricket in the grass until

he himself was ready to resume it. The cricket too seemed to fancy that in some scheme of its own it had got there. "Chirrrrrrup," it said; "chirrrrrrup. . . ."

"Lord what a place that was at Wimblehurst!" he broke out. "If ever I get a day off we'll motor there, George, and run over that dog that sleeps in the High Street. Always was a dog asleep there—always. Always. . . . I'd like to see the old shop again. I daresay old Ruck still stands between the sheep at his door, grinning with all his teeth, and Marbel, silly beggar! comes out with his white apron on and a pencil stuck behind his ear, trying to look awake. . . . Wonder if they know it's me? I'd like 'em somehow to know it's me."

"They'll have had the International Tea Company and all sorts of people cutting them up," I said. "And that dog's been on the pavement this six years—can't sleep even there, poor dear, because of the motor-horns and its shattered nerves."

"Movin' everywhere," said my uncle. "I expect you're right. . . . It's a big time we're in, George. It's a big Progressive On-coming Imperial Time. This Palestine business—the daring of it. . . . It's—it's a Process, George. And we got our hands on it. Here we sit—with our hands on it, George. Entrusted.

"It seems quiet to-night. But if we could see and hear." He waved his cigar towards Leatherhead and London.

"There they are, millions, George. Jes' think of what they've been up to to-day—those ten millions—each one doing his own particular job. You can't grasp it. It's like old Whitman says—what is it he says? Well, anyway it's like old Whitman. Fine chap, Whitman! Fine old chap! Queer, you can't quote him! . . . And these millions aren't anything. There's the millions over seas, hundreds of millions, Chinee, M'rocco, Africa generally, 'Merica. . . . Well, here we are, with power, with leisure, picked out—because we've been energetic, because we've seized opportunities, because we've made things hum when other people have waited for them to hum. See? Here we are—with our hands on it. Big people. Big growing people. In a sort of way—Forces."

He paused. "It's wonderful, George," he said.

"Anglo-Saxon energy," I said softly to the night.

"That's it, George—energy. It's put things in our grip—threads, wires, stretching out and out, George, from that little office of ours, out to West Africa, out to Egypt, out to Inja, out east, west, north and south. Running the world practically. Running it faster and faster. Creative. There's that

Palestine canal affair. Marvellous idee! Suppose we take that up, suppose we let ourselves in for it, us and the others, and run that water-sluice from the Mediterranean into the Dead Sea Valley—think of the difference it will make! All the desert blooming like a rose, Jericho lost for ever, all the Holy Places under water. . . . Very likely destroy Christianity. . . ."

He mused for a space. "Cuttin' canals," murmured my uncle. "Making tunnels. . . . New countries. . . . New Centres. . . . Zzzz. . . . Finance. . . . Not only Palestine.

"I wonder where we shall get before we done, George? We got a lot of big things going. We got the investing public sound and sure. I don't see why in the end we shouldn't be very big. There's difficulties—but I'm equal to them. We're still a bit soft in our bones, but they'll harden all right. . . . I suppose, after all, I'm worth something like a million, George—cleared up and settled. If I got out of things now. It's a great time, George, a wonderful time! . . ."

I glanced through the twilight at his convexity—and I must confess it struck me that on the whole he wasn't particularly good value.

"We got our hands on things, George—us big people. We got to hang together, George—run the show. Join up with the old order like that mill-wheel of Kipling's. (Finest thing he ever wrote, George;—I jes' been reading it again. Made me buy Lady Grove.) Well, we got to run the country, George. It's ours. Make it a Scientific—Organised—Business—Enterprise. Put idees into it. 'Lectrify it. Run the Press. Run all sorts of developments. All sorts of developments. I been talking to Lord Boom. I been talking to all sorts of people. Great things. Progress. The world on business lines. Only jes' beginning. . . ."

He fell into a deep meditation.

He Zzzzed for a time and ceased.

"*Yes*," he said at last in the tone of a man who has at last emerged with ultimate solutions to the profoundest problems.

"What?" I said after a seemly pause.

My uncle hung fire for a moment and it seemed to me the fate of nations trembled in the balance. Then he spoke as one who speaks from the very bottom of his heart—and I think it was the very bottom of his heart.

"I'd jes' like to drop into the Eastry Arms, jes' when all those beggars in the parlour are sittin' down to whist, Ruck and Marbel and all, and give 'em ten minutes of my mind, George. Straight from the shoulder. Jes' exactly what I think of them.

It's a little thing, but I'd like to do it—jes' once before I die. . . ."

He rested on that for some time—Zzzz-ing.

Then he broke out at a new place in a tone of detached criticism.

"There's Boom," he reflected.

"It's a wonderful system—this old British system, George. It's staid and stable and yet it has a place for new men. We come up and take our places. It's almost expected. We take a hand. That's where our Democracy differs from America. Over there a man succeeds; all he gets is money. Here there's a system—open to every one—practically. . . . Chaps like Boom—come from nowhere."

His voice ceased. I reflected upon the spirit of his words. Suddenly I kicked my feet in the air, rolled on my side and sat up suddenly on my deck-chair with my legs down.

"You don't mean it!" I said.

"Mean what, George?"

"Subscription to the party funds. Reciprocal advantage. Have we got to that?"

"Whad you driving at, George?"

"You know. They'd never do it, man!"

"Do what?" he said feebly; and, "Why shouldn't they?"

"They'd not even go to a baronetcy. *No!* . . . And yet, of course, there's Boom! And Collingshead—and Gorver. They've done beer, they've done snippets! After all Tono-Bungay—it's not like a turf commission agent or anything like that! . . . There have of course been some very gentlemanly commission agents. It isn't like a fool of a scientific man who can't make money!"

My uncle grunted; we'd differed on that issue before.

A malignant humour took possession of me. "What would they call you?" I speculated. "The vicar would like Duffield. Too much like Duffer! Difficult thing, a title." I ran my mind over various possibilities. "Why not take a leaf from a Socialist tract I came upon yesterday. Chap says we're all getting delocalised. Beautiful word—delocalised! Why not be the first delocalised peer? That gives you—Tono-Bungay! There is a Bungay, you know. Lord Tono of Bungay—in bottles everywhere. Eh?"

My uncle astonished me by losing his temper.

"Damn it, George, you don't seem to see I'm serious! You're always sneering at Tono-Bungay! As though it was some sort of swindle. It was perfec'ly legitimate trade, perfec'ly

legitimate. Good value and a good article. . . . When I come up here and tell you plans and exchange idees—you sneer at me. You *do*. You don't see—it's a big thing. It's a big thing. You got to get used to new circumstances. You got to face what lies before us. You got to drop that tone. . . ."

§ 9

My uncle was not altogether swallowed up in business and ambition. He kept in touch with modern thought. For example, he was, I know, greatly swayed by what he called "This Overman idee, Nietzsche—all that stuff."

He mingled those comforting suggestions of a potent and exceptional human being emancipated from the pettier limitations of integrity with the Napoleonic legend. It gave his imagination a considerable outlet. That Napoleonic legend! The real mischief of Napolon's immensely disastrous and accidental career began only when he was dead and the romantic type of mind was free to elaborate his character. I do believe that my uncle would have made a far less egregious smash if there had been no Napoleonic legend to misguide him. He was in many ways better and infinitely kinder than his career. But when in doubt between decent conduct and a base advantage, that cult came in more and more influentially; "think of Napoleon; think what the inflexibly wilful Napoleon would have done with such scruples as yours"; that was the rule and the end was invariably a new step in dishonour.

My uncle was in an unsystematic way a collector of Napoleonic relics; the bigger the book about his hero, the more readily he bought it; he purchased letters and tinsel and weapons that bore however remotely upon the man of destiny, and he even secured in Geneva, though he never brought it home, an old coach in which Buonaparte might have ridden; he crowded the quiet walls of Lady Grove with engravings and figures of him, preferring, my aunt remarked, the more convex portraits with the white vest and those statuettes with the hands behind the back which throw forward the figure. The Durgans watched him through it all, sardonically.

And he would stand after breakfast at times in the light of the window at Lady Grove, a little apart, with two fingers of one hand stuck between his waistcoat-buttons and his chin sunken, thinking—the most preposterous little fat man in the world. It made my aunt feel, she said, "like an old Field-Marshal—knocks me into a cocked hat, George!"

Perhaps this Napoleonic bias made him a little less frequent with his cigars than he would otherwise have been, but of that I cannot be sure, and it certainly caused my aunt a considerable amount of vexation after he had read "Napoleon and the Fair Sex," because for a time that roused him to a sense of a side of life he had in his commercial preoccupations very largely forgotten. Suggestion plays so great a part in this field. My uncle took the next opportunity and had an "affair"!

It was not a very impassioned affair, and the exact particulars never of course reached me. It is quite by chance I know anything of it at all. One evening I was surprised to come upon my uncle in a mixture of Bohemia and smart people at an At Home in the flat of Robbert, the R.A. who painted my aunt, and he was standing a little apart in a recess, talking or rather being talked to in undertones by a plump, blonde little woman in pale blue, a Helen Scrymgeour who wrote novels and was organising a weekly magazine. I elbowed a large lady who was saying something about them, but I didn't need to hear the thing she said to perceive the relationship of the two. It hit me like a placard on a hoarding. I was amazed the whole gathering did not see it. Perhaps they did. She was wearing a remarkably fine diamond necklace, much too fine for journalism, and regarding him with that quality of questionable proprietorship, of leashed but straining intimacy, that seems inseparable from this sort of relationship. It is so much more palpable than matrimony. If anything was wanted to complete my conviction it was my uncle's eyes when presently he became aware of mine, a certain embarrassment and a certain pride and defiance. And the next day he made an opportunity to praise the lady's intelligence to me concisely, lest I should miss the point of it all.

After that I heard some gossip—from a friend of the lady's. I was much too curious to do anything but listen. I had never in all my life imagined my uncle in an amorous relation. It would appear that she called him her "God in the Car"—after the hero in a novel of Anthony Hope's. It was essential to the convention of their relations that he should go relentlessly whenever business called and it was generally arranged that it did call. To him women were an incident, it was understood between them; Ambition was the master-passion. A great world called him and the noble hunger for Power. I have never been able to discover just how honest Mrs. Scrymgeour was in all this, but it is quite possible the immense glamour of his financial largeness prevailed with her and that she did bring a

really romantic feeling to their encounters. There must have been some extraordinary moments.

I was a good deal exercised and distressed about my aunt when I realised what was afoot. I thought it would prove a terrible humiliation to her. I suspected her of keeping up a brave front with the loss of my uncle's affections fretting at her heart, but there I simply under-estimated her. She didn't hear for some time and when she did hear she was extremely angry and energetic. The sentimental situation didn't trouble her for a moment. She decided that my uncle " wanted smacking." She accentuated herself with an unexpected new hat, went and gave him an inconceivable talking-to at the Hardingham, and then came round to " blow-up " me for not telling her what was going on before. . . .

I tried to bring her to a proper sense of the accepted values in this affair, but my aunt's originality of outlook was never so invincible. " Men don't tell on one another in affairs of passion," I protested, and suchlike worldly excuses.

" Women ! " she said in high indignation, " and men ! It isn't women and men—it's him and me, George ! Why don't you talk sense ?

" Old passion's all very well, George, in its way, and I'm the last person to be jealous. But this is old nonsense. . . . I'm not going to let him show off what a silly old lobster he is, to other women. . . . I'll mark every scrap of his underclothes with red letters, ' Ponderevo—Private '—every scrap. . . .

" Going about making love indeed !—in abdominal belts !—at his time of life ! . . . ."

I cannot imagine what passed between her and my uncle. But I have no doubt that for once her customary badinage was laid aside. How they talked then I do not know, for I who knew them so well had never heard that much of intimacy between them. At any rate it was a concerned and preoccupied " God in the Car " I had to deal with in the next few days, unusually Zzzz-y and given to slight impatient gestures that had nothing to do with the current conversation. And it was evident that in all directions he was finding things unusually difficult to explain.

All the intimate moments in this affair were hidden from me, but in the end my aunt triumphed. He did not so much throw as jerk over Mrs. Scrymgeour, and she did not so much make a novel of it as upset a huge pailful of attenuated and adulterated female soul upon this occasion. My aunt did not appear in that, even remotely. So that it is doubtful if the lady knew the

real causes of her abandonment. The Napoleonic hero was practically unmarried, and he threw over his lady as Napoleon threw over Josephine, for a great alliance. . . .

It was a triumph for my aunt, but it had its price. For some time it was evident things were strained between them. He gave up the lady, but he resented having to do so, deeply. She had meant more to his imagination than one could have supposed. He wouldn't for a long time " come round." He became touchy and impatient and secretive towards my aunt, and she, I noted, after an amazing check or so, stopped that stream of kindly abuse that had flowed for so long and had been so great a refreshment in their lives. They were both the poorer for its cessation, both less happy. She devoted herself more and more to Lady Grove and the humours and complications of its management. The servants took to her—as they say—she god-mothered three Susans during her rule, the coachman's, the gardener's, and the Up Hill game-keeper's. She got together a library of old household books that were in the vein of the place. She revived the still-room, and became a great artist in jellies and elder and cowslip wine.

§ 10

And while I neglected the development of my uncle's finances —and my own, in my scientific work and my absorbing conflict with the difficulties of flying—his schemes grew more and more expansive and hazardous, and his spending wilder and laxer. I believe that a haunting sense of the intensifying unsoundness of his position accounts largely for his increasing irritability and his increasing secretiveness with my aunt and myself during these crowning years. He dreaded, I think, having to explain, he feared our jests might pierce unwittingly to the truth. Even in the privacy of his mind he would not face the truth. He was accumulating unrealisable securities in his safes until they hung a potential avalanche over the economic world. But his buying became a fever, and his restless desire to keep it up with himself that he was making a triumphant progress to limitless wealth gnawed deeper and deeper. A curious feature of this time with him was his buying over and over again of similar things. His ideas seemed to run in series. Within a twelve-month he bought five new motor-cars, each more swift and powerful than its predecessor, and only the repeated prompt resignation of his chief chauffeur at each moment of danger, prevented his driving them himself. He used them more and more. He developed a passion for locomotion for its own sake.

Then he began to chafe at Lady Grove, fretted by a chance jest he had overheard at a dinner. "This house, George," he said, "it's a misfit. There's no elbow-room in it; it's choked with old memories. . . . And I can't stand all these damned Durgans!

"That Chap in the corner, George. No! the other corner! The man in a cherry-colour coat. He watches you! He'd look silly if I stuck a poker through his Gizzard!"

"He'd look," I reflected, "much as he does now. As though he was amused."

He replaced his glasses, which had fallen at his emotion, and glared at his antagonists. "What are they? What are they all, the lot of 'em? Dead as Mutton! They just stuck in the mud. They didn't even rise to the Reformation. The old out-of-date Reformation! Move with the times!—they moved against the times. Just a Family of Failure—they never even tried! . . .

"They're jes', George, exactly what I'm not. Exactly. It isn't suitable. . . . All this living in the Past.

"And I want a bigger place, too, George. I want air and sunlight and room to move about and more service. A house where you can get a Move on things! Zzzz. Why! it's like a discord—it jars—even to have the telephone. . . . There's nothing, nothing except the terrace, that's worth a Rap. It's all dark and old and dried up and full of old-fashioned things—musty old idees—fitter for a silver-fish than a modern man. . . . I don't know how I got here."

He broke out into a new grievance. "That damned vicar," he complained, "thinks I ought to think myself lucky to get this place! Every time I meet him I can see him think it. . . . One of these days, George, I'll show him what a Mod'un house is like!"

And he did.

I remember the day when he declared, as Americans say, for Crest Hill. He had come up to see my new gas-plant, for I was then only just beginning to experiment with auxiliary collapsible balloons, and all the time the shine of his glasses was wandering away to the open Down beyond. "Let's go back to Lady Grove over the hill," he said. "Something I want to show you. Something fine!"

It was an empty sunlit place that summer evening, sky and earth warm with sundown, and a pewit or so just accentuating the pleasant stillness that ends a long clear day. A beautiful peace, it was, to wreck for ever. And there was my uncle, the modern man of power, in his grey top-hat and his grey suit and

his black-ribboned glasses, short, thin-legged, large-stomached, pointing and gesticulating, threatening this calm.

He began with a wave of his arm. "That's the place, George," he said. "See ?"

"Eh !" I cried—for I had been thinking of remote things.

"I got it."

"Got what ?"

"For a house !—a Twentieth Century house ! That's the place for it !"

One of his characteristic phrases was begotten in him. "Four-square to the winds of heaven, George !" he said. "Eh ? Four-square to the winds of heaven !"

"You'll get the winds up here," I said.

"A mammoth house it ought to be, George—to suit these hills."

"Quite," I said.

"Great galleries and things—running out there and there—See ? I been thinking of it, George ! Looking out all this way—across the Weald. With its back to Lady Grove."

"And the morning sun in its eye."

"Like an eagle, George—like an eagle !"

So he broached to me what speedily became the leading occupation of his culminating years, Crest Hill. But all the world has heard of that extravagant place which grew and changed its plans as it grew, and bubbled like a salted snail, and burgeoned and bulged and evermore grew. I know not what delirium of pinnacles and terraces and arcades and corridors glittered at last upon the uplands of his mind ; the place, for all that its expansion was terminated abruptly by our collapse, is wonderful enough as it stands—that empty instinctive building of a childless man. His chief architect was a young man named Westminster, whose work he had picked out in the architecture room of the Royal Academy on account of a certain grandiose courage in it, but with him he associated from time to time a number of fellow professionals, stonemasons, sanitary engineers, painters, sculptors, scribes, metal-workers, wood-carvers, furniture designers, ceramic specialists, landscape gardeners, and the man who designs the arrangement and ventilation of the various new houses in the London Zoological Gardens. In addition he had his own ideas. The thing occupied his mind at all times, but it held it completely from Friday night to Monday morning. He would come down to Lady Grove on Friday night in a crowded motor-car that almost dripped architects. He didn't, however, confine himself to architects, every one was liable to

an invitation to week-end and view Crest Hill, and many an eager promoter, unaware of how Napoleonically and completely my uncle had departmentalised his mind, tried to creep up to him by way of tiles and ventilators and new electric fittings. Always on Sunday mornings, unless the weather was vile, he would, so soon as breakfast and his secretaries were disposed of, visit the site with a considerable retinue, and alter and develop plans, making modifications, Zzzz-ing, giving immense new orders verbally—an unsatisfactory way, as Westminster and the contractors ultimately found.

There he stands in my memory, the symbol of this age for me, the man of luck and advertisement, the current master of the world. There he stands upon the great outward sweep of the terrace before the huge main entrance, a little figure, ridiculously disproportionate to that forty-foot arch, with the granite ball behind him—the astronomical ball, brass-coopered, that represented the world, with a little adjustable tube of lenses on a gun-metal arm that focussed the sun upon just that point of the earth on which it chanced to be shining vertically. There he stands, Napoleonically grouped with his retinue, men in tweeds and golfing-suits, a little solicitor, whose name I forget, in grey trousers and a black jacket, and Westminster in Jaeger underclothing, a floriferous tie, and a peculiar brown cloth of his own. The downland breeze flutters my uncle's coat-tails, disarranges his stiff hair, and insists on the evidence of undisciplined appetites in face and form, as he points out this or that feature in the prospect to his attentive collaborator.

Below are hundreds of feet of wheeling-planks, ditches, excavations, heaps of earth, piles of garden stone from the Wealden ridges. On either hand the walls of his irrelevant unmeaning palace rise. At one time he had working in that place—disturbing the economic balance of the whole countryside by their presence—upwards of three thousand men. . . .

So he poses for my picture amidst the raw beginnings that were never to be completed. He did the strangest things about that place, things more and more detached from any conception of financial scale, things more and more apart from sober humanity. He seemed to think himself at last released from any such limitations. He moved a quite considerable hill, and nearly sixty mature trees were moved with it to open his prospect eastward, moved it about two hundred feet to the south. At another time he caught a suggestion from some city restaurant and made a billiard-room roofed with plate glass beneath the waters of his ornamental lake. He furnished one wing

while its roof still awaited completion. He had a swimming-bath thirty feet square next to his bedroom upstairs, and to crown it all he commenced a great wall to hold all his dominions together, free from the invasion of common men. It was a ten-foot wall, glass-surmounted, and had it been completed as he intended it, it would have had a total length of nearly eleven miles. Some of it towards the last was so dishonestly built that it collapsed within a year upon its foundations, but some miles of it still stand. I never think of it now but what I think of the hundreds of eager little investors who followed his "star," whose hopes and lives, whose wives' security and children's prospects are all mixed up beyond redemption with that flaking mortar. . . .

It is curious how many of these modern financiers of chance and bluff have ended their careers by building. It was not merely my uncle. Sooner or later they all seem to bring their luck to the test of realisation, try to make their fluid opulence coagulate out as bricks and mortar, bring moonshine into relations with a weekly wages-sheet. Then the whole fabric of confidence and imagination totters—and down they come. . . .

When I think of that despoiled hillside, that colossal litter of bricks and mortar, and crude roads and paths, the scaffolding and sheds, the general quality of unforeseeing outrage upon the peace of nature, I am reminded of a chat I had with the vicar one bleak day after he had witnessed a glide. He talked to me of aeronautics as I stood in jersey and shorts beside my machine, fresh from alighting, and his cadaverous face failed to conceal a peculiar desolation that possessed him.

"Almost you convince me," he said coming up to me, "against my will. . . . A marvellous invention! But it will take you a long time, sir, before you can emulate that perfect mechanism—the wing of a bird."

He looked at my sheds.

"You've changed the look of this valley, too," he said.

"Temporary defilements," I remarked, guessing what was in his mind.

"Of course. Things come and go. Things come and go. But—— H'm. I've just been up over the hill to look at Mr. Edward Ponderevo's new house. That—that is something more permanent. A magnificent place!—in many ways. Imposing. I've never somehow brought myself to go that way before. . . . Things are greatly advanced. . . . We find—the great number of strangers introduced into the villages about

here by these operations, working men chiefly, a little embarrassing—— It puts us out. They bring a new spirit into the place; betting—ideas—all sorts of queer notions. Our publicans like it, of course, and they come and sleep in one's outhouses—and make the place a little unsafe at nights. The other morning I couldn't sleep—a slight dyspepsia—and I looked out of the window. I was amazed to see people going by on bicycles. A silent procession. I counted ninety-seven —in the dawn. All going up to the new road for Crest Hill. Remarkable I thought it. And so I've been up to see what they were doing."

"They would have been more than remarkable thirty years ago," I said.

"Yes, indeed. Things change. We think nothing of it now at all—comparatively. And that big house——"

He raised his eyebrows. "Really stupendous! . . . Stupendous.

"All the hillside—the old turf—cut to ribbons!"

His eye searched my face. "We've grown so accustomed to look up to Lady Grove," he said, and smiled in search of sympathy. "It shifts our centre of gravity."

"Things will readjust themselves," I lied.

He snatched at the phrase. "Of course," he said. "They'll readjust themselves—settle down again. Must. In the old way. It's bound to come right again—a comforting thought. Yes. After all, Lady Grove itself had to be built once upon a time—was—to begin with—artificial."

His eye returned to my aeroplane. He sought to dismiss his graver preoccupations. "I should think twice," he remarked, "before I trusted myself to that concern. . . . But I suppose one grows accustomed to the motion."

He bade me good-morning and went his way, bowed and thoughtful. . . .

He had kept the truth from his mind a long time, but that morning it had forced its way to him with an aspect that brooked no denial that this time it was not just changes that were coming *in* his world, but that all his world lay open and defenceless, conquered and surrendered, doomed, so far as he could see, root and branch, scale and form alike, to change.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

SOARING

§ I

For nearly all the time that my uncle was incubating and hatching Crest Hill I was busy in a little transverse valley between that great beginning and Lady Grove with more and more costly and ambitious experiments in aerial navigation. This work was indeed the main substance of my life through all the great time of the Tono-Bungay symphony.

I have told already how I came to devote myself to this system of inquiries, how in a sort of disgust with the common adventure of life I took up the dropped ends of my college studies, taking them up again with a man's resolution instead of a boy's ambition. From the first I did well at this work. It was, I think, largely a case of special aptitude, of a peculiar irrelevant vein of faculty running through my mind. It is one of those things men seem to have by chance, that has little or nothing to do with their general merit, and which it is ridiculous to be either conceited or modest about. I did get through a very big mass of work in those years, working for a time with a concentrated fierceness that left little of such energy or capacity as I possess unused. I worked out a series of problems connected with the stability of bodies pitching in the air and the internal movements of the wind, and I also revolutionised one leading part at least of the theory of explosive engines. These things are to be found in the *Philosophical Transactions*, the *Mathematical Journal*, and less frequently in one or two other such publications, and they needn't detain us here. Indeed, I doubt if I could write about them here. One acquires a sort of shorthand for one's notes and mind in relation to such special work. I have never taught nor lectured, that is to say I have never had to express my thoughts about mechanical things in ordinary everyday language, and I doubt very much if I could do so now without extreme tedium. . . .

My work was to begin with very largely theoretical. I was able to attack such early necessities of verification as arose with quite little models, using a turn-table to get the motion through the air, and cane, whalebone and silk as building material. But a time came when incalculable factors crept in, factors of human capacity and factors of insufficient experimental knowledge, when one must needs guess and try. Then I had to enlarge the scale of my operations and soon I had enlarged them very

greatly. I set to work almost concurrently on the balance and stability of gliders and upon the steering of inflated bags, the latter a particularly expensive branch of work. I was no doubt moved by something of the same spirit of lavish expenditure that was running away with my uncle in these developments. Presently my establishment above Lady Grove had grown to a painted wood châlet big enough to accommodate six men, and in which I would sometimes live for three weeks together; to a gasometer, to a motor-house, to three big corrugated-roofed sheds and lock-up houses, to a stage from which to start gliders, to a workshop and so forth. A rough road was made. We brought up gas from Cheaping and electricity from Woking, which place I found also afforded a friendly workshop for larger operations than I could manage. I had the luck also to find a man who seemed my heaven-sent second-in-command—Cothope his name was. He was a self-educated man; he had formerly been a sapper and he was one of the best and handiest working engineers alive. Without him I do not think I could have achieved half what I have done. At times he has been not so much my assistant as my collaborator, and has followed my fortunes to this day. Other men came and went as I needed them.

I do not know how far it is possible to convey to any one who has not experienced it, the peculiar interest, the peculiar satisfaction that lies in a sustained research when one is not hampered by want of money. It is a different thing from any other sort of human effort. You are free from the exasperating conflict with your fellow creatures altogether—at least so far as the essential work goes—that for me is its peculiar merit. Scientific truth is the remotest of mistresses, she hides in strange places, she is attained by tortuous and laborious roads, but *she is always there!* Win to her and she will not fail you; she is yours and mankind's for ever. She is reality, the one reality I have found in this strange disorder of existence. She will not sulk with you, nor misunderstand you, nor cheat you of your reward upon some petty doubt. You cannot change her by advertisement or clamour, nor stifle her in vulgarities. Things grow under your hands when you serve her, things that are permanent as nothing else is permanent in the whole life of man. That, I think, is the peculiar satisfaction of science and its enduring reward. . . .

The taking up of experimental work produced a great change in my personal habits. I have told how already once in my life at Wimblehurst I had a period of discipline and continuous effort, and how when I came to South Kensington I became

demoralised by the immense effect of London, by its innumerable imperative demands upon my attention and curiosity. And I parted with much of my personal pride when I gave up Science for the development of Tono-Bungay. But my poverty kept me abstinent and my youthful romanticism kept me chaste until my married life was well under way. Then in all directions I relaxed. I did a large amount of work, but I never troubled to think whether it was my maximum nor whether the moods and indolences that came to me at times were avoidable things. With the coming of plenty I ate abundantly and foolishly, drank freely and followed my impulses more and more carelessly. I felt no reason why I should do anything else. Never at any point did I use myself to the edge of my capacity. The emotional crisis of my divorce did not produce any immediate change in these matters of personal discipline. I found some difficulty at first in concentrating my mind upon scientific work, it was so much more exacting than business, but I got over that difficulty by smoking. I became an inordinate cigar smoker ; it gave me moods of profound depression, but I treated these usually by the homœopathic method—by lighting another cigar. I didn't realise at all how loose my moral and nervous fibre had become until I reached the practical side of my investigations and was face to face with the necessity of finding out just how it felt to use a glider and just what a man could do with one.

I got into this relaxed habit of living in spite of very real tendencies in my nature towards discipline. I've never been in love with self-indulgence. That philosophy of the loose lip and the lax paunch is one for which I've always had an instinctive distrust. I like bare things, stripped things, plain, austere and continent things, fine lines and cold colours. But in these plethoric times when there is too much coarse stuff for everybody and the struggle for life takes the form of competitive advertisement and the effort to fill your neighbour's eye, when there is no urgent demand either for personal courage, sound nerves or stark beauty, we find ourselves by accident. Always before these times the bulk of the people did not over-eat themselves because they couldn't whether they wanted to do so or no, and all but a very few were kept " fit " by unavoidable exercise and personal danger. Now, if only he pitch his standard low enough and keep free from pride, almost any one can achieve a sort of excess. You can go through contemporary life fudging and evading, indulging and slacking, never really hungry nor frightened nor passionately stirred, your highest moment a mere sentimental orgasm ; and your first real contact with

primary and elemental necessities, the sweat of your death-bed. So I think it was with my uncle; so, very nearly, it was with me.

But the glider brought me up smartly. I had to find out how these things went down the air, and the only way to find out is to go down with one. And for a time I wouldn't face it.

There is something impersonal about a book I suppose. At any rate I find myself able to write down here just the confession I've never been able to make to any one face to face, the frightful trouble it was to me to bring myself to do what I suppose every other coloured boy in the West Indies could do without turning a hair, and that is to fling myself off for my first soar down the wind. The first trial was bound to be the worst, it was an experiment I made with life, and the chance of death or injury was, I supposed, about equal to the chance of success. I believed that with a dawn-like lucidity. I had begun with a glider that I imagined was on the lines of the Wright Brothers aeroplane, but I could not be sure. It might turn over. I might upset it. It might burrow its nose at the end and smash itself and me. The conditions of the flight necessitated alert attention: it wasn't a thing to be done by jumping off and shutting one's eyes or getting angry or drunk to do it. One had to use one's weight to balance. And when at last I did it, it was horrible—for ten seconds. For ten seconds or so, as I swept down the air flattened on my infernal framework and with the wind in my eyes, the rush of the ground beneath me filled me with sick and helpless terror; I felt as though some violent oscillatory current was throbbing in brain and backbone, and I groaned aloud. I set my teeth and groaned. It was a groan wrung out of me in spite of myself. My sensations of terror swooped to a climax.

And then, you know, they ended!

Suddenly my terror was over and done with. I was soaring through the air right way up, steadily, and no mischance had happened. I felt intensely alive and my nerves were strung like a bow. I shifted a limb, swerved and shouted between fear and triumph as I recovered from the swerve and heeled the other way and steadied myself.

I thought I was going to hit a rook that was flying athwart me—it was queer with what projectile silence that jumped upon me out of nothingness, and I yelled helplessly, "Get out of the way!" The bird doubled itself up like a partly inverted V, flapped, went up to the right abruptly and vanished from my circle of interest. Then I saw the shadow of my aeroplane keeping a fixed distance before me and very steady, and the

turf as it seemed streaming out behind it. The turf !—it wasn't after all streaming so impossibly fast. . . .

When I came gliding down to the safe spread of level green I had chosen, I was as cool and ready as a city clerk who drops off an omnibus in motion, and I had learnt much more than soaring. I tilted up her nose at the right moment, levelled again and grounded like a snowflake on a windless day. I lay flat for an instant and then knelt up and got on my feet, atremble, but very satisfied with myself. Cothope was running down the hill to me. . . .

But from that day I went into training, and I kept myself in training for many months. I had delayed my experiments for very nearly six weeks on various excuses because of my dread of this first flight, because of the slackness of body and spirit that had come to me with the business life. The shame of that cowardice spurred me none the less because it was probably altogether my own secret. I felt that Cothope at any rate might suspect. Well—he shouldn't suspect again.

It is curious that I remember that shame and self-accusation and its consequences far more distinctly than I recall the weeks of vacillation before I soared. For a time I went altogether without alcohol, I stopped smoking altogether and ate very sparingly, and every day I did something that called a little upon my nerves and muscles. I soared as frequently as I could. I substituted a motor-bicycle for the London train and took my chances in the southward traffic, and I even tried what thrills were to be got upon a horse. But they put me on made horses, and I conceived a perhaps unworthy contempt for the certitudes of equestrian exercise in comparison with the adventures of mechanism. Also I walked along the high wall at the back of Lady Grove garden, and at last brought myself to stride the gap where the gate comes. If I didn't altogether get rid of a certain giddy instinct by such exercises, at least I trained my will until it didn't matter. And soon I no longer dreaded flight but was eager to go higher into the air, and I came to esteem soaring upon a glider that even over the deepest dip in the ground had barely forty feet of fall beneath it, a mere mockery of what flight might be. I began to dream of the keener freshness in the air high above the beech-woods, and it was rather to satisfy that desire than as any legitimate development of my proper work that presently I turned a part of my energies and the bulk of my private income to the problem of the navigable balloon.

(To be concluded)

THE MONTH

EDITORIAL: *THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ARTS IN THE REPUBLIC—III. Music.* ❧ ❧ **POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC:** THE EMPIRE—(i) **A. M.,** *British India;* (ii) **SYED SIRDAR ALI KHAN,** *The Present Discontent in India;* (iii) **G. EGREMONT,** *The Desert of Australia* ❧ ❧ **REVIEW:** *Orthodoxy, by G. K. CHESTERTON, reviewed by* **R. A. SCOTT-JAMES**

COMMUNICATIONS: (i) *From Messina, by* **O. ROSSETTI AGRESTI;** (ii) *Balance-sheet of a Twenty-five-acre Holding, by* **F. E. GREEN**

EDITORIAL

The Functions of the Arts in the Republic

III. Music

To determine what may be the influence of music upon national character is a task as difficult as to discover which came first—the first hen or the first egg. The problem indeed is almost exactly the same. For modes of music—its particular national character—have been in the case of nearly all races almost entirely affected by the elementary national instrument. Thus we may say that the national musics of Scandinavia, of Scotland, and to a less extent of France are profoundly influenced by the fact that their earliest national instrument was the bagpipe.

The plaintive character of Scottish melodies or of such melodies as the old French fishermen's songs is due almost entirely to the fact that they were sung to the accompaniment of a drone and, in certain instances, to the fact that in one form of pipe the chanter lacks a note of the diatonic scale. Other races first evolved the stringed instrument, plucked by a finger or a plectrum. This gives to the music of Spain, of South America, of the American negro and—according to Mr. Kipling—of the Englishman overseas, its peculiar rhythm and peculiar power to excite certain emotions.

A Scotch melody will make you mournful, a negro melody will fill you with the desire to dance, but it would be a daring man who would say that the Scotsman is mournful because his chanter lacks the leading note of the scale and that the buck negro struts and cake-walks because his first instrument was a gourd across which was stretched a sinew of some beast. On the

other hand, the profound modification which is taking place in English popular—as opposed to English professional—music must, one would imagine, produce some change in the English national character, or, at any rate, the character of that part of England which is urban.

The history of English music is an exceedingly sad one. You have to remember that at the coming of the Hanoverian sovereigns England had a music of its own—a music tender, poetic, sweet and fresh as is the English landscape. Before the Reformation, England had a race of Church composers as solemn, as noble, as emotionally religious and as scientific as any that the world has produced. These, however, or such of them as existed in the days of Elizabeth, fled to Rome—they were mostly church or cathedral organists—and in the Vatican their masses and anthems are still hidden. Such few anthems of theirs as remain we have still with travestied words in songs like "The Leather Bottel" or "The Vicar of Bray."

The Church composers being gone, there remained a group of musicians of whom the name of Lawes may be said to be typical. These culminated in the splendid, the supreme genius of Purcell. For as Shakespeare stands to England so does this great poet of sounds. That he is forgotten, that he is never performed, that his beautiful melodies remain as hidden as do small and delicate pink shells beneath the ocean's sands—for this we have to thank George II. and Mynheer Handel.

In those days there came in the professional musician, so that now in a barber's shop we find a halfpenny paper. In the time of Charles II. in similar establishments there hung upon the walls lutes and viols and when four or five customers were gathered together they were accustomed to beguile their waiting with what was called a "consort"; for a man who could not add extempore another part to a ground bass was considered to be no gentleman. From the time of Handel onwards the man who could do this received that negative title. "Fiddler" we imagine is still a term of contempt. At this day we may see the very same process operating on a small scale in the North of England.

In Yorkshire and in Lancashire there has been since time immemorial a population largely made up of practising amateur musicians, moorland bands, choral societies and the like, all excellent performers producing, scientifically and beautifully, excellent music. But as happened in the South of England two centuries ago, so in the North nowadays the professional musician is depriving the amateur of the desire to do anything more than form an audience. With his excellent means of transit and his cheap places of entertainment the Yorkshire miner and the Lancashire cotton-operator go, instead of three nights a week to their band or glee-singing rehearsals—to the music-hall. This is perhaps lamentable: it is, at any rate, inevitable.

But if in the North the music-hall is destroying the practice of music it is, the optimist might think, doing in the South something to redress the balance. For there can be no doubt that the popular song of to-day with its more elaborate harmonies, its more characteristic rhythms and its occasionally real rendering of feeling is at least an expression of something like the emotional life of the people. Such a song as "Champagne Charlie" or as "Two Lovely Black Eyes" was an expression of mere imbecility whereas such another as "I Wish I had a Pal Like You" is at least an expression of passion. And what is most curious in the popular song of to-day is its pronounced negro colouring.

A large percentage of the songs sung by the most popular performers at the music-halls has the peculiar rhythm, the peculiar full close and the peculiar long, high notes that may be heard in the cane-brakes and the corn-fields every evening. This is peculiarly so in the case of songs sung by Miss Victoria Monks, whose odd mixture of the precise and formal cockney dialect with the negro musical mood evokes from audiences of the proletariat enthusiasms which, if they do not seem incredible to us at least do us good to hear. In the meanwhile, separated by a deep chasm from really national life, the "concerts" of the professional musicians continue. They continue, these performers, as it were, in another sphere, like angels playing upon celestial instruments, remote indeed from any national necessities. The trouble with the professional concert consists of course in the professional. On him or her so much more interest is centred than on the art he dominates.

And in his multitude, what with the exigencies of advertisement, of charity performances, of the sheer difficulty of securing a hearing, he himself is having what is called "a bad time."

INDEED the position of music is very much that of literature. We all, who attend concerts, are on the look-out for a rising star. Some of us believe that this will come from Russia, some from the Near East, some from France, some from Germany. With the death of Brahms, however, the race of great figures amongst composers seemed to come to an end. If, however, we desired to afford prognostications we should say that probably from France, which retains its haunting characteristics, possibly from the United States negro or by a very remote chance from these Islands a new, sweet and great music might arise.

PROBABLY it would arise, if as seems likely the professional executant should be starved out of existence. The immense troops of foreigners who have followed Handel would then come no more and, music production being out of the hands of aliens, the English public, with its natural craving for music, would be forced itself to satisfy its own desires. It might then be possible to form—which it certainly is not now—a quartette party in any provincial town and we might go on to that ideal state, when a grand piano, a flute, a violin and a 'cello should be found in every barber's shop. And this might cause to arise from the midst of a multitude of amateur composers, some thousands of composers who would seriously train themselves and some few Purcells. This indeed might seem the vision of a madman—of a bemused alienophobe—were it not that two hundred years or less ago this was actually the case with the music of England. That it was so, you have only to go to the pages of Mr. Pepys to prove. Did he not write a song called "Beauty Retire," and did he not expect his wife's maids to sing his song and join a consort when it was necessary? And was not even the Puritan Colonel Hutchinson, that high soul of the gentlest birth and breeding—was he not "an incomparable fingerer of the lute?"

(To be continued)

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC

The Empire

I. BRITISH INDIA

Our position in India concerns us seriously because it is a great national responsibility, second only to our responsibility for England herself. Indeed of this latter, rightly understood, it is an element. And it concerns us also as a great experiment in the art of government, the largest in scale, and the strangest, since Cæsar conquered Gaul. We have not set up a State church, but with that single exception, every problem in that art confronts us there, and finds its illustrations, if not its solution. But our responsibility imposes a condition on the experiment. We may not choose our course at our pleasure and indifferently observe and classify its results, but we are confined to lines of action intended to benefit India. For instance, we must not treat India merely as a field for the illustration in parallel of Western developments, highly interesting though this would be. It may seem needless to point out so obvious a limitation, but the temptation it defines is a very real one. We are always in danger of unconsciously confining our thoughts within the lines which Western movements keep definite in our minds. The false analogy and the incomplete consideration of alternatives are the snares which most beset us.

The present stage of the experiment, roughly a hundred years since Lord Wellesley committed us to it on the large scale, is of peculiar interest, in that at last a result begins to show itself, and that one which has startled us into close attention. After a century of endeavour—sincere and intelligent as we have always thought—to serve her interests, we are compelled to ask ourselves whether India repudiates us. If the present agitation were confined to that literate class which, in other countries besides India, finds that education does not of itself lead to a career, the observer might dismiss it as the inevitable, unimportant result of following a Western analogy, hardly interesting because inevitable. But the evident sympathy and support of widely differing classes throughout India gives this movement another significance. We must remember that the salient fact of the Mutiny, that other declaration of results attained, was

the steady loyalty of the native outside the area of disturbance, without which the annihilation of the Bengal Army would have been impossible. In a similar trial, would the most optimistic expect to find the same loyalty now? Would another Edwardes persuade his chief to send the Punjaub force to Delhi?

Anywhere else, we might consider this as the natural result of the subjection of one race to another. But the most prominent feature of Indian history is the patient submission of the native to the foreigner. Only the archæologist knows an India not subject in great part to Mughal or Pathan. There is nothing in that history to suggest the idea, which modern Europe treats as self-evident, that a ruling caste need be of the same race as the ruled. And in all that bloody record of contests for personal supremacy, there is no trace of a question as to the nature of mastership.

In that art of government, which we believe to find its highest expression in the political developments of modern Europe, are we to fail where Turk and Pathan have succeeded? And must we admit our inferiority in that art to those past generations of Englishmen, to which we consider our own superior, if not in intelligence at least in humanity?

Surely our intentions are good. Every Englishman, who thinks about India, wishes that the native may be well fed, cared for in sickness, and protected from oppression either of the private enemy or of the public official. And he hopes that the advantages of our elementary education may in time be extended to every native. Our present ideals for England herself appear to go no further.

In execution we have kept ourselves free from the grosser sins. The ambitious Civil Servant does not defile the native temples to display his zeal. The soldier in high command, recruiting his harem, does not summon for his inspection the daughters of Rajput houses. Not even does a Lieutenant-Governor spend the year's revenue of his province on building a tomb for his mistress, on a scale permitting the adequate expression of his artistic convictions. Such things were common enough under our predecessors. Yet a people which has patiently endured such misgovernment grows restless under rulers informed with the spirit of a Western Liberalism.

Such a result indicates to the observer that the experiment has reached a stage calling for a critical examination of causes and effects.

It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the present age of social progress and mechanical invention should have been chosen for

the great experiment. In consequence India has to receive us, not merely as foreign rulers, no novelty to her, but as innovators. Every contact with us brings change before the native mind, essentially conservative. We ourselves with difficulty adjust our intelligence to the rapidity with which physical science forces upon us those changes, which we agree to call progress. And the acceptance of progress as inevitable, and even welcome, is quite modern. Moreover change is not at the first forced on us by our rulers. New ideas present themselves humbly and tentatively. We discuss them, feeling that we can take or leave them. Not until it is thoroughly familiar to the subject does the official take notice of a new idea.

But India finds raw novelty forced suddenly on her by that Government, which has always hitherto meant to her the support of established order. No wonder the native finds it difficult to adjust himself to a Power which manifests itself in ways so strange to him, and, since the underlying principles are unknown, apparently so capricious.

In the early days of the Company this difficulty was recognised. Its officers resisted the introduction of Western ideas, either material or moral, for fear of unsettling the native mind. Consider how cautiously they set about the suppression of *sati*. In our treatment of the native religions we still hold to the tradition we inherit from them, and the one occasion when we were off our guard, the affair of the greased cartridges, but proves the correctness of our general attitude. We cannot have made many such mistakes, if one so trivial had so marked a consequence. But we have ceased to extend to native mental habits the toleration with which we regard polyandry or the rites of phallus-worship.

Perhaps we are nowadays so deeply influenced by the progressive spirit that we can hardly act except in accordance with it. But we have no right to take for granted that India shares with us that spirit, or will, without resentment, receive it at our dictation. Yet we treat her as if our goodwill were of itself sufficient evidence of the superiority of our ideals. After our English manner, we put right feeling before everything. We assume that our sympathy will be returned because we refuse to think of it as ineffective. But we forget that the foundation of authority is not sympathy, but respect. Consider our relations to powers which actually govern us, the Court of King's Bench, or our County Council. We neither feel towards, nor expect from them, the kindliness, the fellow-feeling, involving an unconscious tendency to exaggerate whatever is common to the

positions of subject and object, which we call sympathy. But the relation is one of understanding and observance of the difference of those positions, and of a certain reserve and reluctance to encroach, with which, if we associate an emotion, it is rather reverence than affection. Much more must this be the case where so great a difference of race, and therefore of manners, traditions and mental habits, makes fellow-feeling impossible between the officer of the State and its subject. It is questionable whether we treat India with respect. Indeed the reforming spirit is essentially disrespectful. However gently it may be said, its "My way is better than yours" asserts a superiority. And we can see how insolently it may come from a foreign official meddling with the affairs of a people he imperfectly understands.

If we had taken as our models the more honest and capable of the Governments we succeeded, or the best-managed native States of to-day, and, confining our activities within the limits of their practice, had merely aimed at giving the subject protection against the foreign enemy, justice between man and man, and an equitable system of taxation, we should at least have given India a government she could understand and respect. And this would not have precluded us from encouraging any spontaneous native movement towards Western education, sanitation, and all the rest. Such movements might be slow and feeble, but, since consonance with native feeling would be the law of their existence, they would have some prospect of out-living English rule, which is more than we can say of most of our reforms.

We may yet find ourselves adopting some such course. Something of the sort will probably be the effect of the measures now in contemplation for increasing the share of the native in the work of legislation.

But if we are not to reform in India, how can we justify our presence there? This raises the question: What is the purpose of government? Modern Europe, if we may judge by the public expression of its ideas, would answer that the object of government is actively to assist in the development of existing institutions towards a better state of things. And Asia, like the older Europe, only asks the sovereign to preserve what exists, so that a man may have about him the things he understands, because he is used to them. These answers but reflect different attitudes towards the divine. For us God must be benevolent, since we want Him as a refuge from the world. His benevolence is inextricably involved in our idea of His existence, as all our attempts to prove it show. And without that quality we have

no use for Him. But the East, always more logical, asks: How can the Creator be a refuge from His Creation? If one is evil, so must the other be. To both sides, Governments, human or divine, are powers above us, and ideas of the one irresistibly attract ideas of the other. We regard both with hope, or at least with indignant protest at promises unfulfilled. But to India

> Is it a King or a God who comes?
> Both are evil, and both are strong.

This for the Hindoo; the Mohammedan idea of government is no nearer to the Western.

It is evident that this difference is fundamental, and that it profoundly affects the question of Indian Reform. But even if we give up the idea of Progress, it does not follow that our supremacy is without justification, or even that we may treat the stability of our position as a matter of secondary importance. It is not as if we had, in imposing ourselves on India, merely changed the *personnel* of some ancient polity, which we could, in withdrawing, hand over intact to a capable successor. We have deeper roots than we commonly think. It is often forgotten how much against our wills we made our successive conquests. The Company was always adverse to any extension of its responsibility, fearing inevitable expense, with little prospect of ultimate profit. And its treatment of Lord Wellesley and Lord Hastings shows its determination to be obeyed. But the consequences of the revision of Lord Wellesley's settlement, after the second Mahratta War—the intolerable sufferings which the Pindaris inflicted on the Native States excluded from our suzerainty—show the real nature of the forces in action. No doubt there were ambitious soldiers in plenty, looking for occasions of quarrel. And certainly Lord Wellesley went out determined to fight Daulat Rao Sindhia, or rather Perron, on account of his transactions with Napoleon. But the Company was always pacific when not involved in England's Western quarrels, and never consented without reluctance to annexation.

We must then consider the forces which overcame that reluctance, forces which still potentially exist. We must recognise that the growth of English dominion was due rather to the administrator than to the soldier. Repeated failures to prop up native governments made it plain that order could only be permanently secured by extensions of the area directly administered by the Company. Military success but provided opportunities for Western tenacity and forethought to take the place of the capricious improvidence of native Courts.

The eighteenth century was peculiarly a time of unrest in India. The weakness of the successors of Aurangzib, and the independence attained by their deputies in outlying provinces, perhaps, too, some decay in the Mohammedan character, permitted the rise of the Mahratta Confederacy. The successes of the Mahrattas increased the tendency to anarchy, since they could not give a stable government to the provinces they occupied. Indeed they hardly tried to do so, preferring the tribute to the right to govern. It was inevitable that India should pass into the hands of the Power which could establish order after victory, so the Company became the only possible heir to the Moguls.

Had Ahmad Shah Durani used his opportunities after Panipat, and seized the throne of Delhi, he might have founded a strong Pathan dynasty, which could have pushed the Mahrattas back again across the Nerbuddha. There would then have been no growth of the Company's power, since there would not have existed the weakness which created the opportunity. And for another reason. A strong government in Hindostan would have prevented the formation of the regular regiments under European officers, which, in the end, became the weakness of the Mahrattas. Jaswant Rao Holkar, even though fighting alone, was more dangerous than Perron, as his pursuit of Monson shows. And the whole Confederacy, fighting after the old fashion, would have been too much for us. At least this was Sir Arthur Wellesley's opinion, after Assaye. But the favourable moment was allowed to pass, and the internal quarrels of the Mahrattas, after the decay of the Peshwaship, produced the final confusion, from which Lord Wellesley had to rescue India.

The question of supremacy, which was then decided by the almost accidental presence of a Western race, merely rests in abeyance, and the withdrawal of that race would open it again. No constitutional fiction we may set up would stand in the way of claimants who have neither our Western respect for institutions nor our dislike of cruelty and bloodshed. The prize might be held in turn by the Pathans, or the Goorkhas, or by the native prince who might attach to himself for the moment some strong body of our native regiments. But, as in the eighteenth century, the inability of any party to hold what it had won would indefinitely prolong the struggle.

The termination of our official connection with India would not be the end of European mastership, but only leave it without restraint. Western efficiency, and above all Western mastery of the mechanical side of war, would have their value just the

same. As in the eighteenth century, India would provide a career for the blackguard of genius, in whom the Western strength of purpose would combine with the subtlety of the East to make effective a conscienceless rapacity common to both. Such was the nature of Thomas of Hansi, and of the unspeakable Sumru.

If such would be the consequences of our withdrawal from India, it is obvious that we cannot think of it lightly. Even the unconvinced reformer must admit it to be essential to his schemes that India should remain under a government which can give them some prospect of endurance. What will be the use of careful arrangements for the allocation of funds in support of female education, when the day comes to which the Sikhs look forward, and there is not left in Bengal a virgin or a rupee.

And those of us who think that our function in India may be limited to the preservation of what she herself most values, will feel still more strongly that its own stability must be the first object of our Government.

A. M.

II. THE PRESENT DISCONTENT IN INDIA

By Syed Sirdar Ali Khan

THERE is a certain class of publicist who, having preconceived ideas, refuses to allow its *dicta* to be modified by facts. Attention has been directed of late towards India, and certain members of the House of Commons have constituted themselves the mouthpiece of the clamorous section of Bengal. It is surprising how little they have done, despite the long connection some of them have had with India, towards revealing the true state of affairs in that province. It might almost be thought that their object was to suppress rather than disclose the truth. One of their most confident assertions used to be "there is no unrest in India." Events have exposed this fallacy. It is only necessary to look around, and we see on all sides that there is unrest. Indeed I must go further and describe the prevalent discontent as amounting to a seditious movement aimed at the British *régime* in a degree scarcely less marked than was the rising of fifty years ago.

To delay longer in recognising this spirit is to run the risk, nay to court the certainty, of widespread activity. Matters have reached the crisis when action and action alone can be effective. The day has passed for smooth words; soft answers will but add strength to the smouldering fire that threatens even now to burst into flames. Weakness threatens England in India with peril, and India herself with anarchy!

It does not need much investigation to discover how this state of things has been brought to pass. Fresh from the strain of pre-British days the natives of India—that is to say, of course, the upper classes—took with avidity to the methods of the West. Education was begun and systems rapidly extended in response to a growing demand. At first the experiment seemed so successful that the one idea was to multiply the literate Indian *ad infinitum*. The moment of reaction or rather the recognition of the truth has arrived. The system was wrong at the bottom. It was as if a full-grown man were to be born into the world. The Indian educated in English had information, but he was lacking in experience and knowledge of how to apply it and how to extract from it the true benefit of this esoteric instruction. The educated Indian has not been satisfied with education in itself as a self-educator, as the means of raising the community in the search for civilisation; from this point of

view its sole advantage has been that he may clamour for political rights.

Now political rights in India are something that were never known or heard of in her past history. If I except the successful soldier who carved out a kingdom for himself with his sword, the idea of asserting political rights never occurred to any one in this peninsula before the advent of the British. The very wealthy, the very learned even, had no such rights nor even dreamed of claiming them. The British Government changed this system fifty years ago. It made, however, the mistake of beginning mass education, so to speak, in the middle. The nimble-minded Babu was quick to learn the string of facts placed before him. He did not waste time in studying their cause and effect. He learnt them by rote, and he heeded only the obvious lesson they taught, as it were, on the surface. One day he had no political rights, and even no desire for them. The next he is taught that he has them, only to find that he has no free right to use them. This forms the case of the Extremists, it is this that has won for them the sympathy of emotional and itinerant members of the House of Commons. The agitators and their English friends have forgotten that political rights are valueless unless they are turned to good uses. In India they would at present bring not peace but a sword !

For fifty years peace has reigned in India, and the troubles of the Mutiny are forgotten. If this is so, still more completely forgotten is the state of the country when Moghul and Mahratta fought for supremacy, when war and rapine marked its usual condition. The sword has now been beaten into the ploughshare, and peace, England's peace, has prevailed so long that no thought is given as to what would follow on the realisation of the cry, " Drive out the British ! " A little reflection alone is needed to prove that British rule is indispensable to India in the interests of the Indians themselves. On this ground alone the claims of the Extremists break down and call for the opposition of every Indian concerned in the welfare of his country.

But there is another side to the picture and it cannot be ignored. British rule has taught the rights of man, and in India the time has come for some response to the cry for *swaraj*, not in the seditious sense, but in its true meaning of " local self-government." The whole trend of British policy in India has been to lift the Indian up to a point where, no matter whether he attains it or not, he shall be capable of self-government, in the sense at the least of managing his own local affairs. A beginning indeed has been made in this direction. When the Legislative

Councils were first created Indians were included in the membership. At first, only chiefs and notables were eligible, but the qualifications have since been widened, and it is no exaggeration to say that any one may be elected to them now. The qualification is both simple and the best—merit and ability. Nor is it only on the Legislative Councils that Indians are to be found; in every department they hold high offices. They are admitted to the Civil Service, the Provincial Service has been specially created for them. The appointment of Indians to responsible positions has been beneficial to the country and also to the British raj. Viscount Morley has extended the system, and opened a new avenue of useful service for Indians, by including two eminent Indian gentlemen in his council at Whitehall, and much to the joy of my community one of them is a Mohammedan. In whatever direction the principle of local self-government is extended it is essential that it preserves as its sole watchword and test thorough efficiency. If it deviates from that standard the change will be for the worse.

But the concession of some Indian demands in the direction of local self-government must not blind us to the prevalent sedition and to the fact that it is largely organised. Let me give an instance with regard to the recent Bombay riots which came under my personal knowledge. These riots were nominally caused by the trial and sentence of Mr. Tilak. Thousands of Hindu mill-hands left work. Why? Crowds collected, Europeans were stoned, and when the leaders raised the cry of "Tilak Maharaj ki jaye," the crowd repeated it parrot-like. A little inquiry revealed the truth. The prosecution of Tilak was only an excuse. The emissaries sent from Poona and other centres to organise the riots rarely mentioned Tilak's name. Why should they? Their audience was wholly illiterate, *Kesari* (Tilak's paper) meant as little to them as the *Times*. In every mill disguised agents were at work preaching against the Government, and ostracising those who would not join them by declaring that they were unclean, *i.e.*, eaters of cow's flesh. The answer as to the cause of the trouble was always "Hookum Hai," "it is the order." Whose order? That of the organised party of sedition, who were ready to proceed to any lengths to attain their ends.

It must not be supposed that these tactics are confined to one time or place. They are in daily operation, and the creed of "Down with the English" is being preached by a band of sedition-mongers making up by their energy for their want of numbers throughout the length and breadth of India. The *ryot* is being cajoled into the belief that he is over-taxed, that

the failure of his crops is due to the shortcomings of the British administrator and that his sole chance of salvation is the downfall of the British raj. Yet there are those who declare that unrest in India is an official invention.

It is in Bengal that the seditious movement has reached its height. There the courts are teeming with prisoners, anarchists and even murderers figuring in the list. But why did the authorities refuse to act sooner, why were the police so long inactive ? The answer is because it was the order of the day in English political circles to deny that any unrest existed. A far worse blunder was committed when leading agitators like Lala Lajpat Rai were pardoned after sentence and others had their terms of punishment reduced. This mistaken lenience was due to the refusal to look facts in the face and to the desire to gloss over what might prove on closer scrutiny to be unpleasant. Now that it is impossible to ignore facts any longer the authorities at Calcutta have shaken off their apathy and the police are given a free hand. Immediately after the murder of Mrs. and Miss Kennedy they put their hands on the murderer. They unravel a wide plot. They discover sedition to be general, and stores of arms to abound as well as pernicious literature. But these were not the creation of a day. The easy tolerance shown towards the plotters augmented the peril by giving the few with whom the movement began the time and the opportunity to infect the community with their poisonous spirit. The condition of Bengal is the most serious reflection on the capacity of its rulers. Through wilful blindness in the first stages a really perilous situation has been allowed to come into existence.

Knowing Sir Edward Baker, the new Lieutenant-Governor, as well as I do, I feel sanguine that crime will be speedily suppressed. While he is a real sympathiser with genuine grievances and legitimate aspirations, he is a strong man in the performance of his duties and will allow of no trifling with authority. The Bengalis will soon find in him their master.

Let me go a little further into the subject of the prevalent discontent in Bengal. To-day it is directed against the British, but remove the British, and the causes of the discontent remain. For all who desire law and order, the preservation of the tranquillity which is indispensable for prosperity of any kind, the situation would be far worse if the restraining hand disappeared, and the anarchy now plotted secretly could stalk openly through the land. No one who knows anything about India can have any doubt that if British influence were with-

drawn from the country to-day disorder and chaos would prevail there to-morrow. Mohammedan and Hindu are living there in seeming harmony, but the ancient enmity between them still exists, and were the occasion to arise I do not doubt that we Mohammedans would reply with blows to the tricks and smooth words of the Brahmins. There is another point which is generally overlooked, a point which the English politician who knows not India always fails to grasp. So long as caste exists among the Hindus, the work of government must be done by the Brahmins, that is to say, it will be the government of an entirely unrepresentative class. If there is under the present dispensation to a partial extent an English monopoly of office, there would be a far more complete and rigid Brahmin monopoly on the morrow of the establishment of Hindu rule.

The real cause of the unrest is, as I have said elsewhere, indiscriminate education, and I must further add insufficient education. The education given has been especially formulated for passing a test examination. It has not qualified the Bengalis who have turned it to most account to become legislators, reformers or the creators of some perfect system of administration under which every one is to have all that he desires, and precisely what he desires. Their ideal is destruction not construction. Down with the British raj, they say, and no matter what comes in its place. This was very much the view of the Extreme party in the National Congress, of which it was prophesied that however moderate its tone at the beginning it was bound to become a hot-bed of sedition in the end. And so it has to the extent of the influence of the Extremists, the avowedly anti-English party of the Congress. The break-up of the Congress last December, the detachment from the others of the Moderate men who are not blind to facts, is a sign of a more healthy reaction. It has been shown that there is still a large party which realises how much India has benefited in the past by British rule, and that there is nothing at all to put in its place if it were gone.

I have said enough, perhaps, about the really seditious in India, the implacably hostile and the professional agitator and politician. But discontent in India is not wholly seditious or disloyal. There is a certain amount of genuine dissatisfaction to which heed should be paid. This arises mainly from the only partial fulfilment of the promises made from time to time by the British Government to India. I am not referring to *swadeshi*, which in the strict sense of the term is highly laudable, and means nothing more than the development of India's resources. In that sense the British Government has been the promoter and

not the oppressor of *swadeshi*. It has been unremitting in its efforts to support native industries. No genuine scheme for the development of India's resources fails to obtain its sympathy and assistance. The barrenness of result shown by the seditious *swadeshi* or boycott movement brings into stronger light the good work of the Government. No one can doubt that if the British are to be judged by what they have done in material respects for the benefit of India they stand on firm ground, and the Bengali agitators have buttressed up their case with what only a little time was needed to prove a fraud. Even in Bengal no one now takes the so-called *swadeshi* boycott seriously. It is mere clap-trap.

But there are those in India, well-meaning men and honest, whose opinions deserve consideration, who think and say that the promises made in 1858, renewed in 1877, and again repeated in 1903 and 1908 have not been fulfilled, that Indians have not yet been appointed to high places, and that the demand for the fulfilment of these promises falls only on wilfully deaf ears. There may be something of the impatience of the tired child to reach the journey's end in these expectations, but a fixed halt in the Government's intentions for a time debarred the hope that the later stages of the journey would ever be reached. Viscount Morley is entitled to the credit of resuming the forward movement, and under exceptional difficulties created by the sedition in India itself he has adhered manfully to his main purpose. Indians have of late been given high appointments in the country administration, and despite recent events, facts show that instead of being regretted and suspended the course adopted is being steadily pursued.

It may be well to specify some of the further demands or expectations of the agitators of Moderate views who base their political aspirations on the maintenance of British rule, and who would leave in British hands the undiminished control of all military matters and all questions of high policy. They ask for some form of constitution which would be accompanied by the creation of a Parliament of limited and strictly defined powers in India. They ask that all but the very highest posts shall be given to Indians. They want the Arms Act abolished, the right to become volunteers, and a control over the finances. This is, no doubt, a very large programme, and time will be required to bring it to the stage of realisation. But it is necessary to recognise facts, and the aspirations of a nation come under the same head. The programme of the Moderates falls far short of that of the Extremists, who will be content with nothing short of the expulsion

of the British and the acquisition of absolute power by themselves.

I hold that the British Government has only one course to follow with safety to itself and benefit to India. It is to give a more liberal interpretation than has been done in the past to the promises it has made from time to time. What would be the immediate consequences of putting this intention into practice? Indians would be assigned more appointments in the Government service, and consequently they would acquire automatically a larger share in the administration of their own country. One way of effecting this would be to regard them as eligible for employment in all the departments of the public service, excepting the military. With regard to the military side of the question there is only one point, with regard to which many Englishmen both in India and in England agree with us, that calls for reference. It is that there should be a more equitable distribution of the military charges between the two countries.

Among minor but essential improvements may be mentioned the addition of two Indian members to the Governor-General's Council, and also to each of the Provincial Executive Councils. Such members need not hold portfolios nor discharge any executive duties. They should, however, be associated on perfectly equal terms with the English members as consultants and advisers, and no decision of the councils should be valid without their participation. In this way there would be an increase in the authority and influence of the Indian associates with the British high officials who are virtually the sole rulers of the country at present. Take the Legislative Councils, for instance, on which Indians have had seats for many years. These Indian gentlemen who have always won their way to their dignity by sheer merit, have very little voice in the matters submitted to them. No great weight is attached to their opinions and suggestions if they disaccord with the official view. I hold, with many others, that they might render invaluable assistance in preparing the Budget, and it would be a highly interesting experiment to see if an Indian Finance Minister could rival in our time the achievements of Todar Mall in the days of Akbar.

Such in brief are the real requirements of India not in the opinion of the bitterly hostile to English rule, but in that of Moderate men who take an intelligent interest in the state of their country and the problems of the age. Something will have to be done to meet the demand for concessions not to the prejudices of the Bengali faction, but to the reasonable aspirations of intelligent India. It is an occasion, I must add, not for words and

vague statement but for acts. Viscount Morley has to satisfy the demands which all his speeches and despatches indicate to be reasonable in themselves. Circumstances may, and do, render it impracticable to carry out all the reforms, to give us all the remedial measures, that can easily be brought within the four corners of a political programme. But the time has come at least for an instalment. Still more essential is it to say now clearly, and once for all, what will be given and what withheld. We will make the best of what is given for the good of India, and we will try and dispense with what is withheld. But for the peace of India let there be an end to ambiguity and uncertainty.

Only in this way can the ground be taken from under the feet of the unscrupulous agitator and sedition-monger. He only becomes formidable when there is a widespread feeling of discontent. The discontent may be largely unreasonable, that does not matter if it is there. India is not free from that mysterious feeling of unrest which preludes human upheavals and cataclysms. It cannot be ignored, and while some danger-centres admit of being crushed, there are others which only a wise and beneficent statesmanship can cure. British rule is, and must long be, essential to India ; but no one wishes to see it anything but a peaceful rule. The law-breaker must be punished, the anarchist and bomb-thrower must be expelled from our midst, the professional promoter of disturbance and ill-will must be ostracised ; but British rule in India will be materially weakened if it is seen that it rests only on bayonets and martial law. Britain proclaimed a high ideal in India and she will have to live up to it. She has made us definite promises, and she has taught us to value our heritage. The time has arrived for us to come at least in part to our own, and we must hope that before long we shall see Englishmen and Indians working harmoniously together for the good and welfare of India.

III. THE DESERT OF AUSTRALIA

By G. Egremont

A QUARTER of a century ago E. B. Sanger, the petrographer, was engaged by the Government of South Australia to inspect geologically the interior of that immense State. He was away for two years, using camels, the country traversed being impossibly dry for horses. The scene of his operations lay between the south parallels 22° and 30° and the meridians 130° and 140°, in the basin of the continent, and practically its centre.

In after-time Sanger studied with the celebrated German geologist Professor Rosenbusch at the University of Heidelberg. There the present writer had many an opportunity of hearing his impressions and conclusions concerning the region thus explored. A keen observer, a profound and original thinker, a fearless investigator, deeply interested also in biological and sociological problems, America lost one of her most promising sons when, suddenly stricken through by tuberculosis, Edward Berry Sanger untimely passed away. His attitude with regard to us British was one of complete friendship, but he deplored the absence in ourselves as in his own countrymen of that great organising power and application of scientific methods which deeply impressed him as a formidable advantage possessed by the Germans. That fact rather troubled him in connection with this particular subject of non-development. He often declared that, with other nations pressing on behind us in desperate competition, it was unreasonable to expect that we could continue indefinitely to hold so large a domain as Australia by means of a fringe of population settled along portions of the coast; that Australia must permanently belong to those who developed its vast interior—as, for example, the "bad lands" of America were being and would be developed; that as Australia was practically a non-fluvial continent the key to such development lies in the mound-springs.

Sanger so designated these springs, and was probably the first man who intelligently described them and apprehended their importance. He discovered that a line of cold and thermal springs extends north and south through the central basin of our great island-continent. The overland telegraph

wire follows approximately the line of outcrop of these springs. He discovered also the existence of a southerly line of springs running in an east and west direction with the overlap of a certain formation upon the schists of the Flinders range. Such springs issue from the summits of mounds of travertine. These mounds are deposits made by the water—of lime and other substances held in solution and brought to the surface from underground depths. The mounds in general have the form of a truncated cone. On the summit is a basin of clear water bordered by rushes. There is no outgush, but a steady, gentle flow which streams down one side of the mound, running for a short distance, soon sucked under by the parched ground of that arid locality. The water for its brief course changes the prevailing brown, dusty drouthiness into green luxuriance, bringing unsuspected grasses, herbs, and shrubs into being; irrefragably testifying how the land would blossom fruitfully wherever that vivifying touch were maintained. The travertine deposits are immense, and in certain places have formed hills rather than mounds, 200 feet high. With some mounds which have been built up to a considerable height the pressure is insufficient to force the water higher. Then the travertine forms over and completely closes the top of a mound, and the water forces a passage and breaks out afresh near its base. Sanger found these travertine mounds in every stage of development, from one no larger than a beehive accompanying a relatively new spring, to one whence the water had departed, standing alone, as he phrased it, "like a huge, melancholy sentinel." In these mounds are seen the remains of Diprotodon, &c.

Whatever the difference of cosmic creative epochs wherein were operated the evolutionary processes producing the emergence of Australia, the effects of such processes are similar to the effects of those evolutionary processes whence other continents have been begotten. Hence, with whatsoever modifications, Australia possesses generically the main features of other continents in having a central basin toward which slope the more elevated portions lying nearer the shore. It was then actually needful that Sanger should insist upon this commonplace of basal conformity, because many wild theories had obtained credence, whereby the Australian continent was held to be formatively abnormal and geologically as peculiar as its marsupials. In more recent years an authoritative statement ("Encyclopædia Britannica," ninth edition) informs us that "The interior plain of Australia, enclosed by the coast mountain ranges, is a vast

concave table of sandstone, with a surface area of 1,500,000 square miles." It follows that water present within the entire continental scope of catchment not evaporated or carried seaward by watercourses would gravitate into the central basin. Loss of water by evaporation and disemboguement is relatively small. The rivers are everywhere insignificant. Many have no clear embouchure. At uncertain intervals the inland wastes are flooded by torrential rains. But except where held by clay-pans, some of which, however, are true lakes, every drop of rain is quickly absorbed by the thirsty soil. Usually these clay-pans are empty long before the next downpour, displaying a glaring white encrustation consisting of various salts. Their evaporated contents form only a small part of the rain precipitated. Making every allowance for evaporation, the permeative volume of such rain—its volume sunk beneath the surface—must be tremendous. A cattle-breeder having a station in the northern back-blocks of Queensland informed the writer that with a good rain once in five years he considered himself fortunate. So prodigious was the downfall, it seemed as though discharged from an ocean overhead. So wonderful were its results that a magnificent growth of lush vegetation appeared in an incredibly short ensuing period. So quickly did it vanish that a few days would find all creeks bone-dry again, and no particle of water visible outside the dams.

Sanger called attention to the fact demonstrated by meteorological and associated observations, that the actual amount of rainfall on the slopes—more especially the eastern—is largely in excess of any drainage by watercourses. Obviously a considerable proportion soaks into the ground, percolates through the subsoil to the rock, and flows down the incline toward the interior. There, safely stored, it accumulates under great pressure. At certain points in its passage to the central basin it encounters impermeable formations, and is consequently forced to the surface by hydrostatic pressure. Hence the occurrence of the mound-springs. For instance, the water coming from the north-west and north-east meets with a barrier in the schists of the Peake range. As a result, there is a double line of springs concurrent with the outcrop of the schists. No small quantity of water passes on further south until obstructed by the palæozoic rocks of the Flinders range; whereupon it is driven upward and above ground, the efflux constituting an east and west line of springs. The mounds of travertine thus abundantly deposited, and the temperature of the water, clearly indicate that it rises from a great depth. Sanger considered

that the mound-springs might become prime factors in a happy eventual development, because they evidence the positive existence of a vast subterranean sea or store of water beneath that interior and, at present, desert portion of Australia. "The conclusion is plain," he would frequently assert, "that an abundance of water could be procured by appropriate artesian borings through the rocks occupying the central desert. But adequate boring operations could not be undertaken except at an expenditure of energy, ingenuity, and money beyond anything ever given to the greatest efforts so far attempted in this direction. Commensurate results undoubtedly wait upon such operations, it is my firm belief; and they ought to go hand in hand with the construction of a trunk line of railway from south to north through the centre of Australia. The building of that railroad belongs integrally to the plan. Otherwise the needful engineering machinery for such gigantic bores would never get hauled into place. However, that itself would be but making a proper new way to the Far East. A tough job, doubtless, to tap that ages-hoarded bulk of water! Yet what, pray, is National Progress but a series of tough jobs successfully performed by brains, means, and elbow-grease? The country is so little known, so arduous to explore, and so unfairly damned as a whole because of the absence of rivers and surface-water, that no syndicates of commercial millionaires are likely to attain the larger vision and gain the huge reward which will one day belong to those who grapple fitly with the difficulties. The mound-springs are a promise which cannot be broken—under Nature's own sign-manual—of ultimate success to right endeavour. Australia might occupy an infinitely higher position among the nations were these grand twin enterprises accomplished."

The proprietor and overlord of the immense tract directly under consideration is the State of South Australia. Official figures give that State a total length of 1850 miles, an extreme breadth of 650 miles, an area of 903,690 square miles, or 578,361,600 acres, computed as equalling twice France and Germany together. All this stupendous acreage with a population of only 374,000, or less by 7000 than the population of Sheffield! Each South Australian—man, woman, and child—might appropriate over three and a half roods, and still possess collectively a remainder estate aggregating 578 million acres to play with. They are absolute masters, and can dispose of it as their own joint convenience or expedience may dictate. Quite lately they offered ninety millions of those acres in exchange for

the construction of a north and south railway through the continent. Rather, for the main link of such railway—some thousand or eleven hundred miles—as would connect with their southern system, which has been pushed up north about as far as they can go unaided. Though this offer was advertised through the world where "merchants most do congregate," no bargain resulted. Perhaps that was better fortune than we apathetic British deserve; for not everything which succeeds is success. The cost to the constructor of this greatly desired main line was calculated, with ample margin for extras, at five million pounds sterling. Adequate boring operations on a scale sufficient for the development of the interior cannot reasonably be estimated at a smaller amount. Thus ten millions sterling are needed for the combined operations indicated by Sanger. That sum may be set down as a minimum.

Its provision is beyond the present ability of South Australia. Her band of settlers have done bravely, not only in the heavy pioneering work which the opening up of a new country exacts as an inevitable obligation, but in such an extra-colonial enterprise as the erection of the overland telegraph line. As before mentioned, they are at the limit of their northern railway extension; through long years indefatigably carried forward. Here and there they have even hardily advanced to the confines of the desert and put down artesian wells, not infrequently striking water. Such borings are, of course, but comparatively small and shallow, bearing little relation to the gigantic task demanding for its effective achievement a stronger hand and a longer purse than South Australia can, singly, supply. Moreover, this is a no mere local matter. Others are deeply concerned. A United Australia is the natural intermediary here. With population and revenue totalling ten to eleven times those of the proprietary State, the federalised Commonwealth by judicious material assistance might be emboldened to devote some proportion of its eleven and a half millions of income for furthering this great enterprise. There seems no symptom of an independent move toward any systematised reclamation of the interior lands. The present Colonial proposition is to rule off a "white man's" domain at the 18th degree S., all country above such degree to be pooled by the owners—South Australia, Queensland, and West Australia—as Tropical Territory; to continue fringe settlement by throwing open areas at a price of half a crown per acre on the north-eastern and northern coasts for cotton-growing; with European labourers to admit coloured labour therein, but only from British possessions; and to leave the

vast unoccupied central basin absolutely untouched. It is better to crawl, of course, than to tumble. But is a tumble inevitable here? And is a crawl—otherwise a policy of give-up—a safe pace for those who, wherever they are, must march in front? Further, with the capital and skill at the command of the British nation, is it not a simple duty, and will it not eventually prove the clinching of a joint of their own harness, that the British of Great Britain freely and generously enable the British of Australia fully and legitimately to develop their magnificent estate, so that they shall no longer play the expedient waster in makeshifts because autonomy sanctions this dangerous folly?

Consider the opportunity given hostile acquisition by this unlimited power of spendthrift alienation. Without prejudice, romance, or exaggeration, but frankly recognising well-known circumstances and tendencies, let us trace a definite course of action made perfectly feasible under existent conditions for any person or persons who may elect at this moment to adventure. Say that a certain project is mooted in Germany; is (as it would be) favourably received; and the equivalent of ten million English pounds sterling readily subscribed for its purposes. British agents are employed who manipulate through a plausibly named company, say "The Imperial Construction and Exploration Company of South Australia." Thus is obtained a contract from the local Government for the construction under land-grant and mineral concessions of the through continental railroad. An increase of the acreage already proferred in vain would be conceded for actual construction secured by a substantial deposit. And additional concessions and land-grants could, no doubt, be negotiated for adequate boring operations in the central interior basin; probably at an agreed ratio per successful bore. It is stipulated that the constructor shall work the railroad for so many years, after which the local Government has an option of purchase. Their main preliminary attained, the Construction Company would form northern and southern bases, the first easily enough by optioning masses of the cotton-lands. Their trained mineralogists would notify the presence of great iron lodes in the Waitpinga district, and not too remote from Port Victor. One of these lodes shows an outcrop as wide as Fleet Street running in an unbroken line for more than two miles along the surface. That port possesses a good break-water and pier, with usual facilities for loading and unloading. It might well form a convenient southern base, and a handy spot for ironworks where, with German thoroughness and technical

mastery, every requisite for a railway could be manufactured easily enough. Moreover, Port Victor is the coastal terminus of a railway inland. Thence through the settled districts occur many highly mineralised tracts. A range of hills, having a northward trend, and its flanks and abutting levels, carries auriferous veins. Interspersed flats have long been worked for alluvial gold, and in places with considerable success, but, up to the present, in no case has the matrix been discovered. That waits on more scientific, comprehensive, and thorough operations, combined with an ample expenditure. There are numerous gold-bearing reefs in various localities, with millions of tons above water-level. But the stone is refractory to ordinary treatment, because mixed with base metals that frequently coat the gold, which, as well, is often minute in grain. There are cases where the stone has assayed $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 ounces of gold per ton, and the miner has not been able to extract more than as many pennyweights. The entire field, in fact, is peculiarly fitted for the successful exercise of that transcendent aptness in the adaptation of chemical and mechanical processes to the solution of the most abstruse industrial problems wherein the Germans are conspicuously proficient. No portion of the world would yield richer returns to complete exploitation than South Australia. Its Northern Territory promises to become the richest part of the island continent. Many of the formidable difficulties presented are precisely of that description which German methods are more likely than any others to conquer. Prospecting claims and mining leases come under fairly liberal regulations. They are neither troublesome to obtain nor onerous to hold. Between the coast and the southern end of their great railroad this Construction Company's prospectors would discover many highly productive lodes of gold and copper ore. Silver in a lesser degree, most probably. Yet silver in paying quantities is likely enough. On the northern coasts, beside absorbing the cotton country, the capture of metalliferous districts would be pursued. Southerly operations would likewise embrace experiments in every form of settlement available under statutes and regulations, devised with the one idea of attracting population to the wide reaches of yet unsold "Crown lands." Compelling advantage from every detail, and fastening on every available square yard, German organisation would carefully prepare battalions of its creatures, with an equipment of the best technicians suitable, to act as cotton-growers, spice-planters, cattle-raisers, farmers, or what not, and plant them on the land most advantageous for support of a general scheme. All under orders, implicitly

obedient, and well qualified for their various positions. Most would enter through Port Darwin at the end of the world, and far removed from effective—or, at least, numerically effective—supervision. Not to be tedious, thus, or in whatever way was found expedient, impregnable German interests would be created, and an irremovable grip on the colossal State legally acquired.

These operations, however extended, would rank but as subsidiary to the building of the great railway line and commensurate boring operations to prove or disprove the existence of Sanger's predicated subterranean reservoir. Things would march together slowly and surely. Most probably the work would have a simultaneous beginning at both ends.

Construction once well in progress, the great interior plains would come under searching investigation for the first time in history. From the line as depôt and starting-point, expeditions, carefully fitted with best modern appliances and staffs of experts, would penetrate east and west, having as main objects of search (1) traces of water and water-bearing strata, (2) metalliferous districts, (3) good land. Motor-cars of highest power, with tyres specially designed to surmount sandy tracts, would form an important part of the equipment. Travelling at tremendous speed, such cars would make long-distance flying surveys an easy matter; accomplishing totals of mileage in a day sufficient to astound the ghosts of Burke, Wills, Eyre, McDougall Stuart, and all other intrepid but old-fashioned explorers. These expeditions would scour every yard within certain assigned limits laid off at right angles to the line in enormous rectilinear sections parallel to the Equator. The collective width of these sections would equal the length of the railroad thus built by the Construction Company. As the railheads advanced north and south, so would these investigatory forays; or in what other adjusted progression might best serve the purpose in view. Each section would have its executive bureau and staff of operators. Hither the expeditionary forces would send their reports. Wireless and all newest devices in telegraphy and telephony would convey instant news of each important discovery and any promising or prominent feature encountered. After full reports by their experts are rendered, the Bureau will decide as to the availability of that section, and what active operations are needed for its appropriate development. These they would carry through, as part of the general scheme, directly their recommendations were approved by headquarters. At whatever cost of toil and

treasure, the exclusive information thus gained would bestow inestimable advantages on its possessors, and amply justify its winning as a magnificently solid asset in their stupendous balance-sheet. The Construction Company, thus armed, could move intelligently with special knowledge as opposed to general ignorance, and manœuvre for such a placing of its land-grant blocks as would bring what was most valuable within their boundaries. In cases where this was not absolutely practicable, its favoured position as original discoverers and prospectors would ensure the appropriation by the company, under the laws regulating these matters, of whatever good land, metalliferous district, or water-bearing country had been found and was worth the trouble. And, of course, no boring operations would occupy the company outside its own confines. Light branch lines would facilitate haulage of engineering plant, stores, and machinery wherever wanted; in addition to the most modern and powerful motor service. German settlements would occupy all likely spots, aided toward self-maintenance by liberal bonuses and subventions from the Fatherland. Throughout enthusiastic support would have been given by the thousands of Germans already settled in the towns and coastlands of Australia. Nor would others receive with disfavour a stiff and probably permanent enhancement of all land values following completion of the railway. Resultantly, the Construction Company would directly and indirectly control two-thirds of the Continent of Australia. And everything peacefully accomplished under the British Flag and British legislation.

Should the company's scientists and engineers succeed in tapping Sanger's subterranean sea, that incalculable gain would mean more to Australia than does the Nile to Egypt. Phantasy could scarcely exaggerate the accruing benefits; the transmutation of barrenness to fertility, of vacancy to populousness, of what had no worth to riches—a realisation of the prophet's beatific vision. "The wilderness and the parched land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; . . . for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the glowing sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water."

Not to labour points, Sanger usually summarised the case much as follows: "Seeing what others may do, is it not about time you British occupied the position yourselves, and covered this joint of the harness? Any man can now 'draw a bow at a venture' and smite you therethrough. Is not the venture

fundamentally your own? Had you not better, with careful respect to their autonomy, brace up the Australias as one Commonwealth by the loan, or even gift, of means sufficient and your best engineering skill to build that New Way to the Far East, and otherwise to develop that vast interior basin as may be practically best—though the cost be reckoned in solid British pounds sterling? And the mound-springs are there to encourage whoever chooses to take a hand."

REVIEW

"Orthodoxy," by G. K. Chesterton. (Lane.) Reviewed by R. A. Scott-James.

It has often been pointed out that the intellectuals—the people whose business it is to formulate opinions in Parliament, Press and Pulpit—are not really expressing public opinion; they are only expressing the opinion of the intellectuals. Perhaps it would be nearer the mark to say that every civilised or semi-civilised human being may be divided into two persons, the one an unofficial person who chooses, walks, eats, feels and imagines in a private and personal way, the other an individual who registers formal opinions when called upon to do so. The latter corresponds to the "intellectual," and is the dominant element in the souls of the ruling classes; whilst the former, the instinctive, the spontaneous, the common-sense element, dominates the man in the street, but lies hidden, diseased, comatose among the propagators of ideas.

Now it would not be far wrong to describe Mr. Chesterton's philosophy as a sort of sublimated public opinion *minus* the opinion of the intellectuals. To get at what I mean I must for the moment ask the reader to think of Mr. Chesterton as an abstraction. Let him conceive an Englishman, unlike any existing Englishman, who has never heard of Darwin or Spencer; who has never been impregnated with the theory of induction or analytical psychology; an Englishman who has never read or heard of Macaulay, Froude, Carlyle, Ruskin, Bagehot, Mill, Seeley or Mr. Frederic Harrison; who has read none of the poets since Pope; who has never been asked to consider the Reform Bill or the Education Bill, the Oxford Movement or the Æsthetic Movement, Realism or Impressionism, Non-Resistance or the Will to Power, Mr. Bernard Shaw or Mr. Aylmer Maude, the Primrose League or the Labour Party, Mr. Yeats or even Mr. O'Finnigan. Let us imagine that this agreeable abstraction is in the habit of moving about among other abstractions like himself; that he knows a horse when he sees it (even if he cannot ride it); that he is accustomed to hospitable inn-parlours where you may discuss any philosophy so long as it is not a system; that he admires women and is capable of loving them at a respectable British distance; that he likes sunshine and adores the

moon; that he believes in God, the respectability of wives, ballad poetry, good fellowship and good wine.

And now, having stripped Mr. Chesterton so that he is no longer even an attenuated ghost of himself, let us re-clothe him and present him decent and as he is. We must imagine this ignorant and therefore unbiased abstraction suddenly introduced to all the learned jargon of the day. He still retains his simple views about things out of date, and is called upon to pronounce views upon entirely new matters—aristocracy and democracy, religion and scepticism, art and morality, Tolstoy and Nietzsche. A welter of odd ideas and delirious fanaticisms is suddenly sprung upon his simple consciousness. He finds all the intellectual circles in England working themselves into a fury about ideas, factitious ideas, which positively did not exist for him when he was a happy abstraction. Naturally, in his brief visit to the unabstracted world he has not time to study in detail all the philosophies which have been invented for the purposes of debate. But he goes round from circle to circle, listens to this argument and to that, notices the effect which the various philosophies have upon the characters of their exponents, and himself enters into the fun of debate as if he had never been an abstraction at all. He accepts the terminology which he finds ready-made, but of course uses it in his own way—he is obviously unable to take anything for granted like the people who have always been intellectuals. He continually comes across queer verbal usages, and feels bound to declare that what we call free-thinking is not what we call free; that what we call certainties are also what we call uncertain; that aristocrats are unaristocratic; that doubters are dogmatists; and that tradition is an "extension of the franchise." And then the world, having never been out of its own generation, having never been anything so shocking as an abstraction, dismisses Mr. Chesterton with the smiling remark that he is, after all, a brilliant writer of paradoxes.

Now let us try for a moment to put aside our own intellectual prejudices, our preconceptions, and follow Mr. Chesterton along his path of common sense. He himself, in his book on "Orthodoxy," throws over the intellectuals. It is not that he completely refutes them—that would be a denial of his own method; nor that he has completely studied them—that would be a denial of his own character; but he does show us what havoc their methods may work upon the mind, what an overthrow of our workaday notions, our most vivid and keen impressions. If all the things that we seem to know the best, the emotions most

natural to men—"fighting peoples or proud mothers, or first love or fear upon the sea"—if all these things stand for nothing, if they are not to be thought about by our philosophers, what have we got left? The cosmos? "The cosmos is about the smallest hole that a man can hide his head in." He finds that the great popular thinkers—and it is right that he, a potent popular writer, should concern himself with these rather than with the systematic philosophers who adopt tenuous conventions incomprehensible to the common mind—are each and all of them prone to follow exclusively some strange bent of thought, leading by pure reason to one of those awful conclusions which "tend to make a man lose his wits": Tolstoy, for instance, reaching an unthinkable doctrine of self-sacrifice, Nietzsche an equally unthinkable doctrine of egoism, Ibsen, Haeckel, Mr. Shaw, Mr. McCabe—that never-to-be-forgotten Mr. McCabe—each of them by sheer force of logic betrayed into insanity.

> Just as I am affected by the maniac, so I am affected by most modern thinkers. That unmistakable mood or note that I hear from Hanwell, I hear also from half the chairs of science and seats of learning to-day; and most of the mad doctors are mad doctors in more senses than one. They all have exactly that combination we have noted; the combination of one expansive and exhaustive reason with a contracted common sense. They are universal only in the sense that they take one thin explanation and carry it very far. But a pattern can stretch for ever and still be a small pattern. They see a chess-board white on black, and if the universe is paved with it, it is still white on black. Like the lunatic, they cannot alter their standpoint, they cannot make a mental effort and suddenly see it black on white.

Madness, he says, is "reason used without root, reason in the void." "Madness may be defined as using mental activity so as to reach mental helplessness." For he notes how some of the materialists, in doubting everything, have cast doubt even on the validity of thought. The complete sceptic says, "I have no right to think for myself. I have no right to think at all." Such a pitch has reason reached that there is no proposition which is not doubted, no ideal which is not an object of attack, no rebel who has a sure faith in his own revolt, no fanatic except the fanatic about nothing. Where are the common things—the things we used to know and care about—the self-contradictory things if you like, but the realities—the things which

make men kill their enemies, go gladly to the stake, or shut themselves in a hermitage.

All these are things which, should intellect so bid, the intellectual is willing to throw overboard. But Mr. Chesterton would rather throw over intellectualism. He prefers to abide by the " test of the imagination," the " test of fairyland." " The only words that ever satisfied me as describing Nature are the terms used in the fairy books, ' charm,' ' spell,' ' enchantment.' They express the arbitrariness of the fact and its mystery. A tree grows fruit because it is a *magic* tree. Water runs downhill because it is bewitched. The sun shines because it is bewitched." The so-called " laws of nature " are not one whit less mysterious because of their uniformity. And again : " It is supposed that if a thing goes on repeating itself it is probably dead ; a piece of clock-work." Mr. Chesterton supposes exactly the opposite. " Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, ' Do it again ' ; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, ' Do it again ' to the sun, and every evening, ' Do it again ' to the moon. . . . Repetition may go on for millions of years, by mere choice, and at any instant it may stop."

Is not this, some one will say, only the " Religio Medici " over again ? Is it not more than two and a half centuries since Sir Thomas Browne said : " That there was a deluge once, seemes not to me so great a miracle as that there is not one always " ; and " where I cannot satisfy my reason, I love to humour my fancy " ; and " I can answer all the objections of Satan and every rebellious reason, with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossibile est.*" Yes, it has all been expressed in the " Religio " ; but surely it is no small matter that in spite of Spencer, Karl Marx, Nietzsche and Mr. Sidney Webb, there should still be a modern and a popular way of using the thoughts of Sir Thomas Browne. Mr. Chesterton has been driven into this apparent reaction by the scientific thinkers whose philosophy he detests. " It was Huxley and Herbert Spencer and Bradlaugh who brought me back to Orthodox theology." His supernaturalism, which he identifies with orthodox Christianity, I should prefer to call the Romance of Christianity—Romance not implying falsity, but rather the sense of the ideal, all that we do in the last resort hold to be good

absolutely and for its own sake. He deliberately takes that which he and other people *admire* or *want* as the standard of truth. "I want to love my neighbour not because he is I, but precisely because he is not I." "The *heart* of humanity, especially of European humanity, is certainly much more *satisfied* by the strange hints and symbols that gather round the Trinitarian idea, the image of a council at which mercy pleads as well as justice. . . ." Mr. Chesterton defends what he calls Christianity not so much on the ground that it is credible, but on the ground that it is satisfying, that it is agreeable.

I say "what he calls Christianity," for he is not innocent of employing a vicious circle by which he arbitrarily calls all that is satisfying to him by the name of Christianity. It endorses, he says, a "first loyalty to things" and enjoins the "reform of things"; it commands a man "not only to look inwards but to look outwards." God is a part of the cosmos, and yet he is distinct from it and from us, or we could not worship him. Christianity commands us to desire to live, and it commands us to be glad to die (and this contradiction, he says, like all the others, is human, just as the virtue of courage is human; for does not courage mean "a strong desire to live taking the form of a readiness to die?") It is against compromise, against the "dilution of two things," neither of which "is present in its full strength or contributes its full colour"; it endorses the extremes of pride and humility, anger and love, mercy and severity. It is full-blooded, allowing place for every human emotion, directing anger against the crime, and love towards the criminal. And he draws a fanciful and grotesque picture of the Christian Church as a "heavenly chariot" whirling through the ages "fierce and fast with any war-horse," swerving "to left and right, so as exactly to avoid enormous obstacles."

I shall not examine this fanciful picture. The Christian Church may have indulged every extreme in human life, but the Christianity of the Bible takes sides definitely. And as for the Catholic Church, embracing as it did so many seemingly contradictory elements, it is nevertheless true that at one time it failed to satisfy human nature because it was too ascetic, and that at another time it caused bloody revolt because it was worldly and luxurious. But I need not pursue this question, for the "orthodoxy" which Mr. Chesterton defends is not the teaching of the Christian Churches. At first sight it seems to be anarchy modified by mysticism and friendship for persons. But it is more than that. Negatively it is a protest against false culture and cant, and we cannot fail to see that it is at the

same time a protest against the virtue which precedes false culture—the incessant, arduous effort to seek truth with the help of the intellect. Positively, it champions the spiritual perceptions on the one hand, and the physical senses on the other—the excellence of the manifold activities of the human body and soul. Both in his view provide the proper avenues of truth. Every spiritual emotion and every animal passion is in itself good and excellent. For him the struggle of life resolves itself into a romantic game, with immortality as its conclusion. The one discipline which he upholds is the one precept he has taken from Christianity, that arising from love for your neighbour. And that unnameable quality in life which in every deeper feeling and every keen perception lights the spirit and charges it with an unearthly knowledge is in his philosophy the love of God and the source of the love for persons.

COMMUNICATIONS

I. From Messina

To the Editor of THE ENGLISH REVIEW.

DEAR SIR,—The Red Cross expedition left Rome for Spezia on the 31st ult., reaching Spezia early on the morning of the 1st, whence we embarked on an emigrant ship, the *Taormina*, for Messina. Amongst the nurses were the Princess di Teano and the Princess d'Antuni, the Marchesa Guiccioli, Contessa di Carpegna, Marchesa Monaldi, Signora Roesler Franz, Contessa Camerana, Signora Winspeare, Signora Sigismondi, Duchessa di Torlonia, Signora Rufo Scaletta, Contessa Berardina, Contessa Tua Franchi Verney, and others ; in all thirty-two.

There were some thousand soldiers on the ship, but when we had been sailing about an hour an order came by wireless telegraphy directing us to return to Spezia to disembark the troops, so that we only really started at about four in the afternoon. We did nothing all that day. On the 2nd, Saturday, we received orders to make the beds to receive the wounded. The ship is, as I said, one usually employed in transporting some 2000 emigrants between Genoa and New York, and the whole of the second and third deck is given up to sleeping accommodation. Two rows of berths run the whole length of the ship.

At 4 A.M. Sunday we reached Messina, and anchored outside the port. At 7 we received orders to enter the port and anchor beside the *Regina Elena*. While we were still outside the port, rowing-boats came up asking for bread for neighbouring villages, the crumbling ruins of which we could see in the dawning light. Sacks of bread were thrown down to them. As we steamed into the Port of Messina, the tragic sight of the wrecked city lay before us : great heaps of smouldering ruins from which arose clouds of black smoke. The reality is indeed as bad as the *worst* newspaper accounts. The quay has sunk to the level of the sea, and in some places beneath it ; a railway carriage is visible in the water, flung there by the earthquake.

The façades of some of the houses facing the port are still standing, but one sees the sky through the windows, and the buildings are gutted inside. The streets are so heaped with ruins that all transit is impossible. In the midst of the heaps of

crumbling masonry, arms and legs stick out. Some of the houses have fallen down on one side, leaving the other half standing; inside one of these I saw a piano open with the music on the stand; a kitchen table laid for breakfast; women's clothes scattered about, &c. Those who visited the town most carefully say there is literally not a house left standing intact; some buildings which seem fairly well preserved from the outside are literally gutted within. All along the quay troops are constantly marching by with shovels and pickaxes, going to the work of excavation. Other processions pass with ten and twenty litters at a time, covered with white sheets: the dead going to burial. The *Croce Rossa* has set up wooden sheds used as hospitals, and litters with the wounded are constantly going to and fro. And all this in the midst of the most exquisite scenery you can imagine, and under a lovely blue sky, and in the mildest of warm weather.

The port is full of war-ships—English, Russian, German, Italian—all unloading bargefuls of provisions and medical apparatus, which are carried ashore. On the quay, crowds of half-naked, stupefied-looking people, the survivors, with their worldly possessions all tied up in bundles of various sizes—chiefly consisting of a few articles of household linen hastily snatched up—are waiting to be carried off into exile on one or other of the ships in port. The Prefect is clearing out all the surviving inhabitants as quickly as possible, before an epidemic breaks out. These lamentable groups of the survivors—two or three out of whole families of ten or twelve persons—are perhaps the most pitiful sight of all.

But to return to us.

About 8 A.M. we got into the port, only to be told that we must again go outside; and now the fearful disorganisation prevailing in high official quarters began to make itself felt. With the wounded lying all about in shanties, deprived of proper help, we were kept idle, unable to do anything, till about 4 P.M. Generals came on board and smiled, and said there was nothing to do: at last the Duke Leopold Torlonia, who accompanied our expedition, had himself rowed ashore, and began to look for the wounded; and soon the first arrived. By 6 we had over a hundred, mostly brought on by German sailors, who did everything in the most orderly and capable way. And now the lack of preparation on the part of the *Croce Rossa* began to make itself apparent. The first painful discovery was that we had no bed-pans on board; then there were no thermometers; only three ice-bags; no ether, no benzine for disinfecting the hypodermic syringes; no disinfectants except sublimate in capsules,

and only six empty wine-bottles for holding the solution ! We had all been strictly enjoined to ask no questions and to wait for orders ; and nobody had thought of organising or distributing the work ; no one was placed in a position of authority, and the utmost disorder and confusion prevailed. Some of the ladies were highly capable trained nurses—more especially an American, Miss Wood, Signora Crispolti, Signora Faravella, and a Russian, Miss Bothin, who had been nine months with the Red Cross in Manchuria ; many others were fairly well trained, and several knew nothing at all about nursing. All were animated with a great wish to work and do their best, but the lack of organisation and of the first necessities of nursing made it a very disheartening job. There were no pillows on board and we had to climb about on the iron supports of the berths, propping up the patients with life-belts and blankets ; even boots were put under their heads. Many of the cases were very serious, several having fractures of the spinal column and of the pelvis ; besides lots of broken arms and legs, and poisoned wounds. Only on the Monday evening, when the ship was crowded with wounded, was any serious attempt made at medical attention.

Many of the cases were very pitiful. There was one woman and her baby, born amidst the ruins, an hour before she was brought on board ; a very beautiful girl who had been dug out from the ruins by her brother, who accompanied her and never left her side, always kissing and consoling her, and watching over her with wonderful devotion and love. There were several small babies brought on board who had lost their parents—one sweetly pretty little thing of about a year, wearing a dainty little chemise on which was embroidered the word " Mimi," evidently the child of well-to-do people ; another little mite of two or so, who could only say she was called " Pippa " ; another poor little thing with both legs broken, who for three days did nothing but shriek " Voglio mamma mia ! Voglio mamma mia ! " (" I want my mother ! I want my mother ! "). Many of the wounded were very aged, as the *Ricovero dei Vecchii* (Asylum for the Aged) had been disinterred ; and we had old women of 80, 92, and even 110 on board. All these people seem stupefied by the immensity of the calamity which has befallen them ; and they would tell you in an expressionless voice that they had lost six or eight children ; husband, father, mother ; five, six, eight brothers and sisters ; many of them being the sole survivors of large families, and all of them remaining absolutely destitute and most of them practically naked. Yet spite of frightful discomfort and suffering, their patience and gratitude for the help

given them was most touching. When we entered the wards the moans and groans that filled the air sounded more like the bleating of a large flock of sheep than anything else I have heard. One group of men I heard saying: "Ah sì, a Messina la bestemmia c'era, l'avarizia c'era, l'usuria c'era, ed è venuto il castigo di Dio" ("Ah yes, at Messina there was blasphemy, there was avarice, there was usury, and now the wrath of God has descended on her"). Most of them seemed to take their misfortunes in this spirit, and I never heard a word of rebellion against Fate. Cries of "Maria! Maria Addolorata aiutatemi! Maria del Carmine soccoretemi!" ("Maria Addolorata help me! Maria del Carmine save me!") resounded on every side.

There were the most awful smells from gangrenous and poisoned wounds. The poor creatures, many of whom had been under the ruins for four, five, and even six days, were simply dying of thirst. Fortunately we had abundance of water, ice, lemons, condensed milk, marsala, cognac, fresh eggs and coffee; and these were distributed freely and constantly with good results. There was also abundance of good bed-linen; but even this began to give out towards the end, as all the dirty sheets, instead of being disinfected and washed, were just thrown overboard.

We remained at Messina till the 6th, having collected about 250 wounded. The doctors were furious at the delays to our departure, caused by the orders and counter-orders which we were constantly receiving from General Mazza, who seemed to change his mind as to our course every half-hour. Having once taken on board as many wounded as we could manage, there was no earthly use in staying on at Messina, and the doctors were afraid that an epidemic of some sort might break out at any moment. At last, on the 6th, after receiving five contradictory orders within six hours, we started for Leghorn at midday, stopping on the 7th at Naples to land a few of our worst cases, amongst which was one poor woman who had fallen into a lot of quicklime and was burnt from head to foot. She was in delirium the whole time, and for the three days she was on board our ship she did nothing but shriek. I helped the doctors to dress her wounds, and every minute we thought she would die in our hands. I was told afterwards that she was recognised as a rich lady of Messina, who owned five *palazzi*.

On the 8th we reached Leghorn, where the local bodies came with stretchers and steam barges and landed our wounded, who were all taken to the Central Hospital, where we visited them in the evening. It is quite the nicest Italian hospital I have seen, and the patients all looked as comfortable as circum-

stances would allow of. Two or three of them flung their arms round my neck and kissed me most affectionately, and all were loud in the expression of their gratitude; though, after the discomfort and privations they had been through, I should have expected them to abuse instead of thanking us.

I wanted to bring with me to Rome a little boy of five who had been left an orphan; his whole family, with the exception of one young brother, having perished under the ruins. He is very handsome, with huge black eyes, and extraordinarily vivacious and intelligent; a perfect little imp, quite unaware of the gravity of his position, and treating the whole expedition as a fine excursion. The Prefect of Leghorn would not let me have him at once, as he had a sort of eczema and is being treated for this in the hospital. He is a very entertaining little fellow, and would certainly be better under personal influence than as a mere number in an institute.

There are lots of refugees in Rome now. Miss P—— has housed three families in her villa. The Stampa (Press Association) has opened a hospital for thirty, and every one is doing what they can to help. I will send you a copy of the *Rivista Popolare*, in which Colajanni writes of the wretched Italian organisation. Every word he says is true.

All those engaged in our expedition were zealous and untiring in their efforts, but the complete lack of organisation largely paralysed its utility. The work was done under the most difficult and discouraging conditions; yet, in spite of this, lots of fractured limbs were set, a few quite serious operations were performed, and we only lost some ten patients on the ship; and those all cases which were quite hopeless from the first.

Besides the patients, we carried to Leghorn a number of refugees—poor survivors of decimated families, left without a rag or a farthing in the world. Of course they were all dressed with the clothes which pour in from every side; and all vie in their efforts to help them. There were two very pretty little children on board, who were being conducted by a friend to their grandparents in Padua, a little girl of seven and a little boy of five. The little girl was sleeping in a room by herself when she was awakened by the earthquake, and found the roof had fallen in; she climbed over the ruins on to the ledge of the roof, and flung herself down from a second floor, reaching the ground quite unhurt! The mother was killed, and the father dangerously wounded.

O. Rossetti Agresti.

II. Balance-sheet of a Twenty-five-acre Holding

To the Editor of The English Review.

Dear Sir,—For the farmer's financial year ending Michaelmas 1908 the balance-sheet of my twenty-five-acre holding shows a profit of £51. That is to say, my regular man and I have each drawn about the same amount out of the holding. He, however, has put in his whole time, whilst I have only been able to put in about half my time, for on wet days the spade has given place to the pen.

Besides this £100 a year we have had to earn the rent and interest as well, so that looking at the result as a whole it is not unsatisfactory for a small holding which has no special advantages.

It should be borne in mind that the holding is over seven miles from a market town; that the land is of a heavy clay soil, which previous to my occupation had been "farmed out"; and that, being situated on a little hill, the working of it on all sides means an expenditure of extra labour. Labour, indeed, including hay-making and excluding my own, has amounted to quite £65. I found that the cost of mowing, making, carrying and stacking my hay worked out at £1 an acre, were I to charge for my own labour, working sometimes sixteen hours a day, and the voluntary labour of a friend who spent ten days of his summer holiday with me. He came from the city, but his labour, I am thankful to say, was of a more strenuous kind than the ordinary run of voluntary labour.

One or two alterations in my method of working my small holding have resulted in a greater gain. Of the three acres of orchard ground under the spade, I have had an acre or so where half-standards are planted laid down to grass and clover between the fruit trees, so that the mowing-machine can cut this at the same time as it cuts the rest of the hay. I shall thereby increase the size of my haystack and afford extra forage for my bees. This has meant the giving up growing of vegetables for market and resulted in a greater saving of labour, for I am too far from a town to market vegetables successfully. Roots have given place to cabbages on the other two acres of fruit trees, for cabbages require less labour and are more nutritious for cattle.

Spade labour, however, still works out at a loss, for I have carefully observed that labour here is pretty equally divided

between stock and the fruit garden and if, therefore, I were to debit the fruit and vegetable account with half-wages it would show a loss.

The details concerning my bottom fruit can be found in *Country Life*, September 26, and I must now unfortunately add to this that my top fruits were a failure this year, the apples bearing practically nothing and the plums very little. The most profitable fruit crops have been strawberries and gooseberries, yet I cannot venture much in growing strawberries, for the strawberry and hay crop come together and it is difficult then to obtain pickers. I have carried out my plan of practically abolishing poultry, which I rank as a sweated industry. There are two or three hens left, but their uninteresting proceedings I have not troubled to record.

The most satisfactory accounts shown are those of horned stock and bees. My cow account shows a decline in gross returns: this can be accounted for by my having one cow less for half the year.

I have discovered one thing, however, about cow-keeping, and that is that winter butter-making really does not pay (the facts concerning which I have already set forth in *Chambers' Journal*). It is true that the price of butter has risen during the year, but in the heart of the country, market fluctuations scarcely affect traditional custom.

The milk, as it comes up from the cow-sheds, is immediately separated, and this separated milk mixed with a cream equivalent is used for weaning calves, the surplus, if any, with the buttermilk, going to the pigs.

Of the twenty-five acres which surround my four-room cottage, twenty-two acres are of grass-land, and three acres under fruit. A little stream trickles through the pasture-land, where two small ponds are held in reserve for any great drought. Everything upon the land, excepting the hedges, has had to be constructed by myself, and by those who have helped me—my cottage, dairy, well, bee-house, cow-shed, pig-sty, cart-shed and calf-shed. The holding is closely surrounded by game preserves, and unless I net my strawberries and currants I do not get any ripe berries to pick. The birds take heavy toll every year, making it extremely difficult to grow fruit with profit, although my apple, plum and damson trees number 750 and my currant and gooseberry bushes over 2000.

I have given up keeping a pony and cart, finding it more advantageous to hire, not only for the hay-making, but also for marketing my fruit.

BALANCE-SHEET: MICHAELMAS 1907 TO MICHAELMAS 1908

Dr.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Cows :						
Cake, straw, bran, &c.	11	4	9			
Service of bulls	1	3	6			
Ploughing and harrowing for seeds	2	1	0			
Mowing, carrying and stacking hay	6	10	9			
Beer for haymakers	0	16	3			
Thatching	0	12	6			
				22	8	9
To Stock Account :						
Value of stock at Michaelmas, 1907	93	0	0			
Cattle bought	14	16	0			
				107	16	0
To Bees :						
Sugar and requisites	1	19	3			
Surrey Bee-Keepers' Association (subscription)	0	5	0			
				2	4	3
To Fruit and Vegetables :						
Straw for strawberries	0	14	2			
Netting	1	0	0			
Manure carting	1	4	0			
Seeds, &c.	0	12	0			
				3	10	2
To Pigs :						
Bran and middlings				8	19	5
To Labour :						
Wages of one man	52	0	0			
Extra labour	5	14	4			
				57	14	4
To Interest on Capital (£964) at 4 per cent.				38	8	0
Rent on ten acres				16	0	0
Tithes				2	8	0
Rates				4	0	0
Insurance				0	15	0
Repairs				0	13	0
Profit				51	0	2
				£315	17	1

Cr.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
By Cows :						
Butter, 698 lb. at 1s. 3d.	43	12	6			
Milk sold and consumed	17	4	5			
Value of haystack	35	0	0			
				95	16	11
By Stock Account :						
Cows and calves sold	71	9	8			
Value of stock, Michaelmas 1908	88	0	0			
				159	9	8
By Bees :						
Sale of bees, hives, &c.	5	7	7			
Honey (410 lb.) and wax	14	12	9			
				20	0	4
By Fruit and Vegetables :						
Strawberries	8	7	8			
Gooseberries	7	13	0			
Plums	0	15	3			
Damsons	0	7	0			
Currants	0	12	6			
Vegetables consumed	5	4	0			
Vegetables sold	0	13	11			
Rhubarb	1	10	0			
Apples	0	10	0			
				25	13	4
By Pigs :						
11 pigs sold	7	16	10			
Value of pigs unsold	7	0	0			
				14	16	10
				£315	17	1

Although it has been a bad year for pigs, with feeding-stuff dear and pork cheap, I have managed not to lose money over them. What has brought me the most profit has been rearing and buying in young pedigree Jerseys, and selling them as they calve down.

My apiary now consists of twenty-six hives, and the twenty hives which yielded any surplus from honey gave an average of 20½ lb. per hive, sold at rates varying from 7½*d.* to 1*s.* per lb.

I have credited no sum in the balance-sheet for thirty-six loads of farmyard manure, which during September was carted from my stock-yard and distributed round the fruit trees. At the same time it should be noticed that nothing has been debited to labour in the dairy.

Finally, I wish to make it clear that though I, as a peasant-proprietor, had to expend a good deal of capital on the purchase of the land and on the erection of my cottage and outbuildings, my working capital for stocking the little farm with cattle, fruit trees and implements barely amounted to £10 an acre.

If I were starting again I would not burden myself with the doubtful charm of ownership, which has often bound my hands too tightly to my stake in the country. I would rent land from the County Council and with more money to jingle in my pockets give myself greater scope for development.

F. E. Green.

P.S.—With reference to your notes on the marketing of small produce in your January number, the following personal experience may interest you :

One day last May, as an experiment, I sent a bushel of my earliest picking of green gooseberries (Winham's Industry) to Mr. ——, reputed to be the largest and best salesman at Covent Garden. The next day I got back a credit note for 9*s.*, less commission, &c., 2*s.* 3*d.*, extra carriage 1*s.*, thus leaving me a net sum of 5*s.* 9*d.* for *one* bushel. On the morning that these were sold, a London greengrocer who attended the market, bought green gooseberries at 7*s.* 6*d.* the *half* bushel, and his samples, he informed me, were not as good as mine. I thereupon wrote and complained to the salesman, asking if my smaller price was due to my being shelved as a small grower. The answer came back that I could hardly expect to be treated in the same manner as that in which they handled consignments from large growers !

The following week I took my gooseberries into Dorking, and though the market price had dropped considerably I made 10*s.* a bushel by selling direct to the greengrocers.

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

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8. THE MONTH: Editorial, Rossettiana, Political and Diplomatic, Reviews, Communications, Supplements

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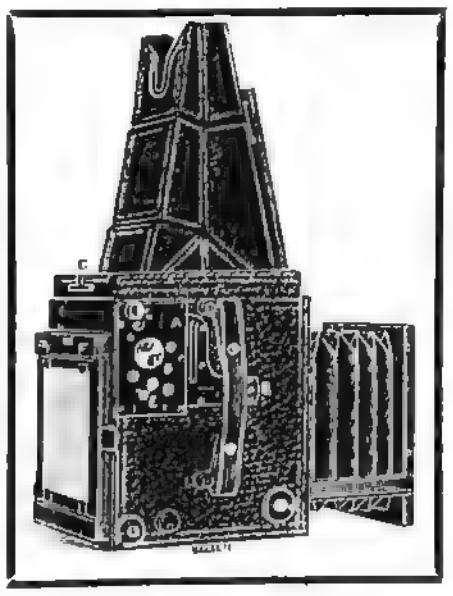

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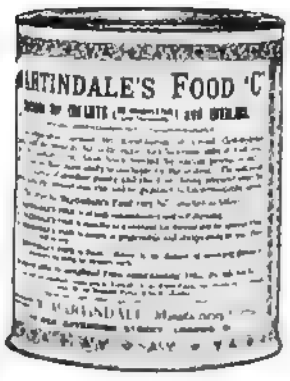

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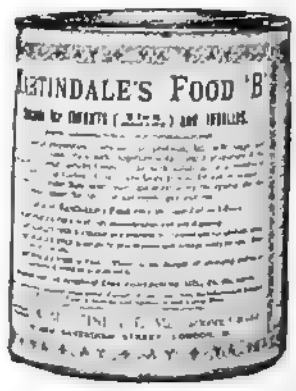

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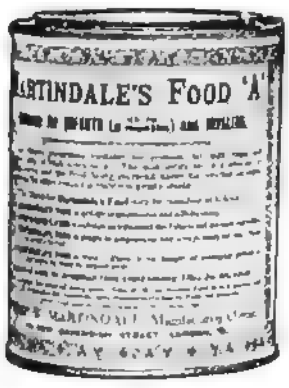

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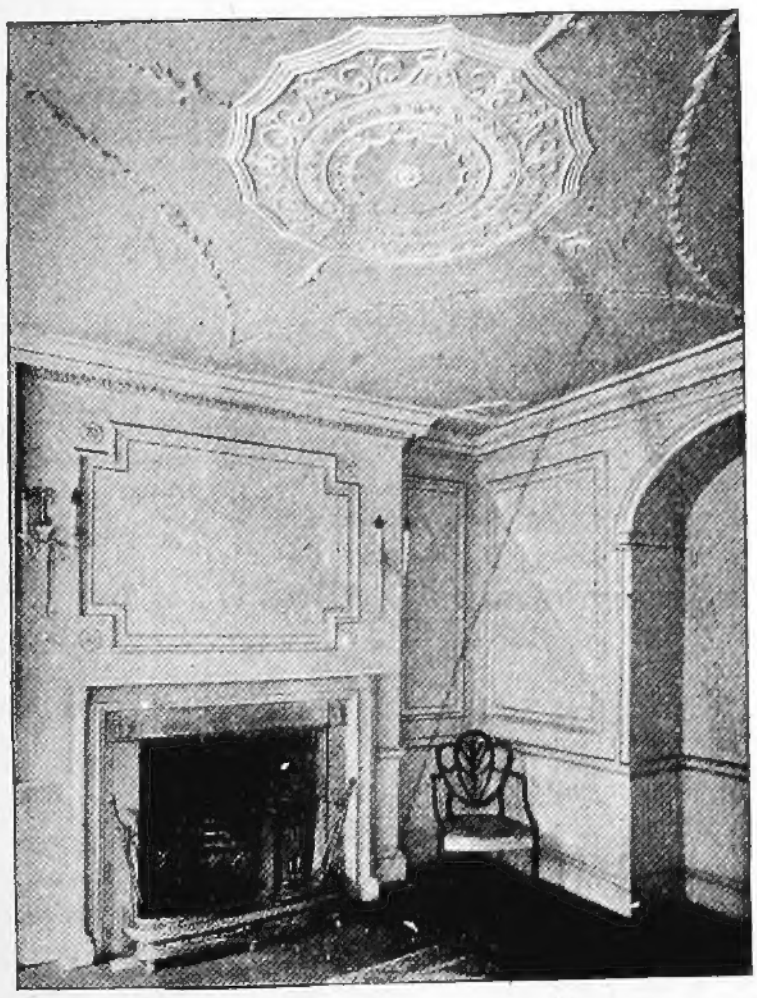

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FEBRUARY 1909

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